Now entering its ninth year, the award-winning

dwb

No. 92 AUGUST 1991 U.K. £1.95 rec. U.S. $5.95

TOM'S BACK... WITH THE COMPANION HE ALWAYS WANTED!

M.O.M.I. EXHIBITION – FIRST PICTURES!

DWB 92 $ 8.50

IT IS around this time of year that I start looking ahead to next year's run of DWB (as you read this the production of October's issue will already be underway). However, I am having serious reservations as to whether to continue beyond DWB #100. The magazine sells healthily, but what is of more concern to me is the lack of reader participation. As an informal fan magazine, DWB expects a greater degree of feedback than it would do as a news-stand publication, so why have only 200 people bothered to take part in this year's Series Surveys, despite the fact that the form has been published three times and despite my pleas for more participation? The surveys are only run every two years, so is it really too much to ask for everyone to take part?

This apathy is noticeable in other areas too. Fandom has no-one but itself to blame for its appalling lack of involvement in campaigns designed to help bring Doctor Who back to our screens. Strategies formulated by various bodies - be it the DWAS's letter-writing campaign or the Day of Action collaboration - resulted in only lukewarm responses, serving only to show the BBC that the hardcore fan element is far smaller than it really is. Well, I for one am fed up with the majority of lazy fans who prefer to let others do all the work, and unless this trend starts to reverse - for example a sudden influx of returns for the Series Surveys - then I will call it a day at #100, and you'll only have yourselves to blame. Meantime I would like to thank the few of you - you know who you are, your names constantly appear in the letters pages for example - who always take an active rôle in such matters and who put the majority to shame.

I note that there is a 48-page DWB scheduled for next month, oh heck, twice my normal workload. Perhaps I just won't bother to produce it. Ho hum.

GARY

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: John Ainsworth, Keith Barnfather & Reeltime Pictures, Jeremy Bentham, Paula Bentham, Anthony Clark, Tony Clark, Stacey Clegg & BBC Video, Robert Cope, Michael Elwyn, Richard Fitzgerald, John Freeman, Duncan Harvey, Peter Linford, Anthony McKay, Riona McNamara & W.H.Allen, David Miller, Paramount, Ian Scoones, Michael Seely, Mike Smith, Wendy Taylor & M.O.M.I., Kathleen Toth, Ian Wheeler.

THE HIGHLANDERS PHOTONOVEL

Story (c) Gerry Davis
Photonovel Adaption Anthony Clark
Telesnaps John Cura/Patrick Mulkern

TO ORDER NEXT ISSUE (DWB#93, September 1991): Send a crossed cheque/PO payable to DWB for £3.50 (£3.90 for first-class card envelope) or US$7.95 to DWB#93, 5 Whitegate Gardens, Harrow-Weald, Middlesex HA3 6BW.
TO SUBSCRIBE from next issue up to January 1992 costs £13 (£15 for 1st class card envelopes) or US$29.95.

DWB ADVERTISING RATES

See last issue for rates and specifications.

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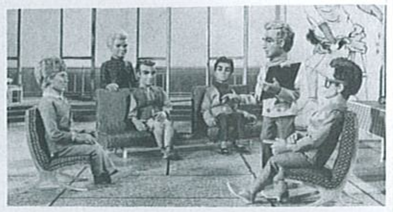
THUNDERBIRD 2



THUNDERBIRDS will be the first Gerry Anderson series to appear on the BBC this October, following the acquiring by the corporation of the optional rights to his many series. New prints of the 32-episode action/adventure puppet series are currently being struck and will be shown on BBC2, probably in the DEF II slot.

TREK NEWS

SEVERAL Stateside readers have written to congratulate us for being the first magazine, anywhere in the world, to carry the news of Denise Crosby's return to 'Star Trek - The Next Generation'. However they are also keen to point out that her rôle in the last episode of the fourth season was not identified, and we concede that it is a bit premature to assume that she is playing Tasha Yar's sister. Time, and the first episode of the fifth season, will tell...

Gates McFadden gave birth to a bouncing 9lb baby boy on June 10th, amid rumours persisting that she will be appearing in the sequel to The Hunt For Red October, even though she denied this at a recent convention. Although there are no plans for her to be missing from any of the next season's episodes, Diana Muldaur has confirmed that she will reappear as Pulaski in at least one episode at the start of the 5th season.

The first episode of season five is titled, unsurprisingly, Redemption part two, while adding fuel to the Crosby mystery is the title for the second episode, provisionally 'Tasha'.

*STVI - The Undiscovered Country, has a US release date set for December 13.

*JAMES HORNER will not be providing the score due to other commitments.

*IT WAS ANNOUNCED at the 25th anniversary convention in Los Angeles in June that Whoopi Goldberg would not be appearing in the film because filming could not be worked into her schedule. However, Michael Dorn is definite as Col. Worf, grandfather of his TV counterpart.

*EXTENSIVE FILMING has been completed in Alaska, depicting a snowbound planet, and the budget has been cut due to the recession, including a reduction in the actors' salaries.

*J.M.DILLIARD has revealed that novelising the script to tie-in with the movie's release will pose no problems since, she says, Meyer's work is very good and there are not the plot holes that littered STV and required clever manoeuvering on her part. However Meyer's continual rewriting through the editing process means that, although filming wrapped up at the end of June, the script won't be final before August!

*BILL SHATNER is doing the talk show rounds to plug "his" new sequel to TekWars; TekLords.

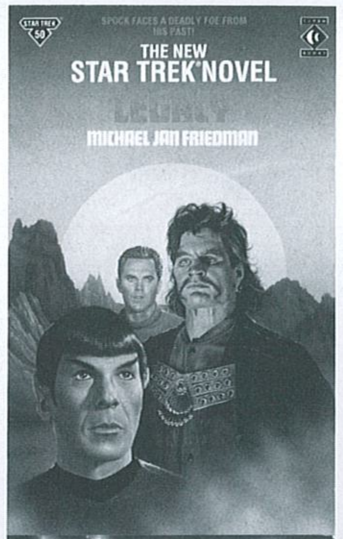
*BRENT SPINER'S ALBUM, Ol' Yellow Eyes, is not available in US stores as yet, but you can place an order by phoning (0101) 1-800-258-6700. The CD costs $14.95 and the cassette is $8.95.

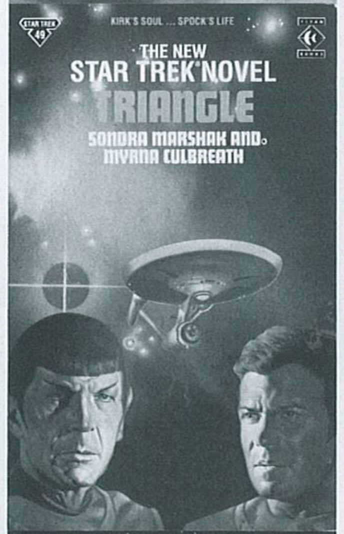
*LOTS of new and reissued merchandise to tie-in with the 25th anniversary is starting to appear - everything from picture card sets to a $900+ chess set from Franklin Mint featuring Kirk and Khan as opposing Kings.

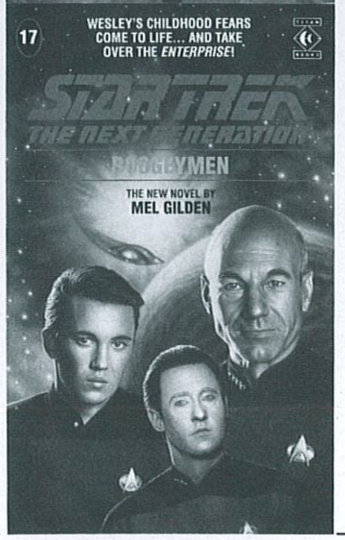
*CREATION has announced a big 5th anniversary STTNG convention to be held in LA next March, with reserved seating for the weekend priced at $145.

*GENE RODDENBERRY has received the 1991 Humanist Award from the American Humanist Society who are impressed with Star Trek's track record for solving problems of co-operation and reason without ever referring to superstition or God or gods - A change from the complaints the series received when it first started because the Enterprise didn't have a chaplain on board!

*THE FIFTIETH Star Trek novel, Legacy by Michael Jan Friedman, is out on 22 August at £3.50. Triangle and Boogeymen were released on 25 July, also at £3.50, as was The Making of Star Trek by Stephen E. Whitfield and Gene Roddenberry, an updated version of the original '60s publication, costing £5.99.


STAR TREK 50
SPOCK FACES A DEADLY FOE FROM HIS PAST!
THE NEW STAR TREK NOVEL
LEGACY
MICHAEL JAN FRIEDMAN


STAR TREK 49
KIRK'S SOUL ... SPOCK'S LIFE
THE NEW STAR TREK NOVEL
TRIANGLE
SONDRA MARSHAK AND MYRNA CULBREATH


17
WESLEY'S CHILDHOOD FEARS COME TO LIFE... AND TAKE OVER THE ENTERPRISE!
STAR TREK THE NEXT GENERATION
BOOGEYMEN
THE NEW NOVEL BY MEL GILDEN

BRIEFLY...

THE BBC is investing £4 million in twelve episodes of Dan Dare, the '50s comic superhero. The series will be made by an independent company and Nigel Havers is favourite for the lead rôle, with Les Grantham and Frank Bruno also apparently in the running. The producers are keen to maintain the essence of the '50s strip series.

CHIMERA, Steve Gallagher's adaption of his original novelisation, is nearing the end of its four-part run on ITV on Sunday nights. DWB was first to bring you news of this series as far back as last summer, and a review wil appear next issue.

VETERAN HAMMER FILMS ACTOR Thorley Walters has died in a London nursing home aged 78.

APPRECIATION is the name of a unique new club specifically catering to fans of US genre shows like the Irwin Allen series, Twilight Zone and the Outer Limits. For further details send an SAE to Appreciation, 73 Bournemouth Park Road, Southend-on-Sea, Essex SS2 5JJ.

DWB#90 mistakenly stated that Ron Koslow played Vincent in B&TB. Of course he was the creator and producer of the series. Sorry...

UFP CON '91

THE BANK HOLIDAY weekend of 3-6th May saw the first major Star Trek convention of the year, held at the Grand Hotel in Birmingham. Maycon saw the return of the UFP committee, responsible for a number of successful conventions over the past decade or so. Unfortunately, their 1991 effort proved to be one of their least successful ventures, for a variety of reasons.

The first major let-down was the lack of guests, although in no way were the committee responsible. The filming of Star Trek VI and the over running of production on STTNG was the major culprit here, but the confirmation of Wil Wheaton's attendance was relieving...until the actor had to pull out at the last minute due to a rather more pressing engagement at The White House! However Paramount research consultant Richard Arnold proved to be popular with the attendees, revealing a huge behind-the-scenes knowledge of both the series and movies.

UFP regulars Diane Duane, Peter Morwood and David Gerrold were also in attendance, but they seemed to have run out of anything interesting to say. The running order for the main hall seemed to be changed around at the whim of the committee, creating great confusion. The first showing of Q-pid was cancelled, meaning that what was to be the second showing on the Sunday was hugely overcrowded, highlighting the fact that the main hall was far too small for the 900+ attendees. There were also long queues for entry into the dealers room and the hotel was not really large enough to accommodate an event of this size, good as it is for smaller conventions. On top of this the rudeness of the stewards did nothing to alleviate already frayed tempers.

Despite this lack of organisation, Star Trek fans have an uncanny ability to enjoy themselves in any situation, and the Saturday evening disco created an atmosphere more befitting a convention.

The general mood of the attendees was summed up at the business meeting on Sunday, when UFP's bid for the 1993 event was lost to the newcomer, Warp One. We sincerely hope that the promise of their convention on paper is lived out in 1993, but would also add that we hope that future events from the UFP team can make up for their stumble in 1991.

MARK WRIGHT & STEPHEN O'BRIEN

LIME GROVE TRIBUTE

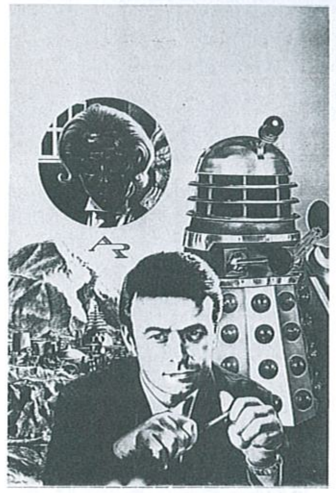
THE PILOT EPISODE of 'An Unearthly Child' is one of the programmes comprising a day-long tribute to Lime Grove Studios on BBC2 this coming Bank Holiday Monday. All of the station's schedule on August 26th is being given over to a selection of well-known vintage programmes which were recorded at the famous studios, which closed down for good on July 26th, under the banner of 'The Grove Family'.

Peter Cregeen gave final approval for the first episode of 'Doctor Who' to be trabsmitted by the Corporation in over 20 months, and the episode was selected as it was recently cleared for release on home video as well as being a previously untransmitted episode of 'Doctor Who'.

BOOKS & VIDEOS

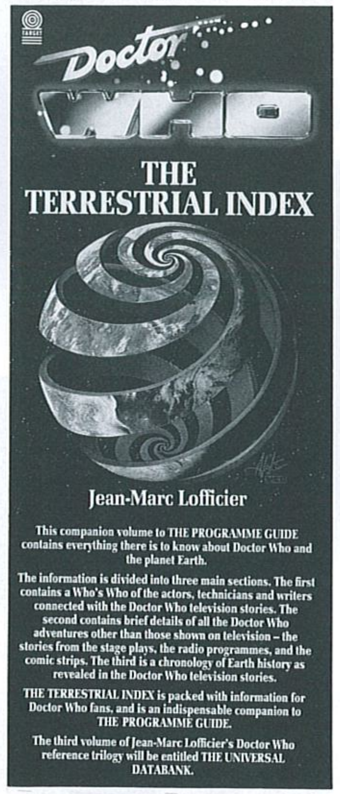
TARGET BOOKS has unveiled a tentative schedule for its second series of new 'Doctor Who' adventures entitled 'Cats Cradle'. Marc Platt will kick off the trilogy in February 1992 with 'Time's Crucible', to be followed by Andrew Cartmel's 'Escape' in April and 'Witch-Mark' by Andrew Hunt in June. The first fiction novel recently released - Genesys by John Peel - has surpassed expectations and a first reprint of the book was ordered before the official publication date!

The reprint of existing titles will continue unabated into 1992, with 'The Daleks' and 'Nightmare Fair' in January and 'Kinda' and 'The Visitation' in February, with all but 'Nightmare Fair' adorned with new covers. Alister Pearson has completed the unenviable task of redesigning what must have been the best-known piece of 'Who art ever painted - Chris Achilleos' 'The Daleks' - and has come up with this excellent rendition.



The debate continues as to just how long it will be before the size of Alister's initials fills an entire book cover, and already BBC Video have taken the step of actually air-brushing 'AP' out of his new covers for the 'The Three Doctors' (see below) and 'Masque of Mandragora' (see page 9) videos, released on August 5th, his consolation being that he finally receives a credit on the back of the sleeve. Meanwhile Andrew Skilleter has been allocated the next two releases: 'Sontaran Experiment/Genesis of the Daleks' and 'The Deadly Assassin', due for release in October.

A reminder that this month sees Terrance Dicks' Timewyrm contribution 'Exodus' and reprints of 'The Three Doctors' and 'Planet of the Spiders' in the shops. Finally, 'The Terrestrial Index' by Jean-Marc Lofficier is due out in November.

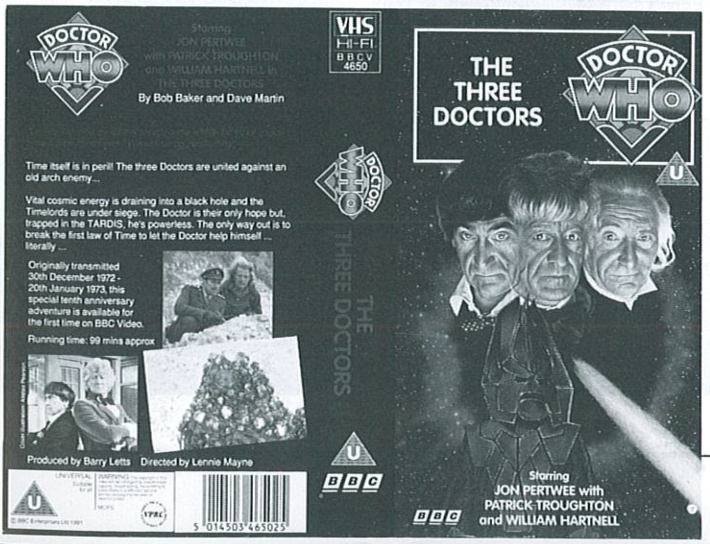


This companion volume to THE PROGRAMME GUIDE contains everything there is to know about Doctor Who and the planet Earth.

The information is divided into three main sections. The first contains a Who's Who of the actors, technicians and writers connected with the Doctor Who television stories. The second contains brief details of all the Doctor Who adventures other than those shown on television – the stories from the stage plays, the radio programmes, and the comic strips. The third is a chronology of Earth history as revealed in the Doctor Who television stories.

THE TERRESTRIAL INDEX is packed with information for Doctor Who fans, and is an indispensable companion to THE PROGRAMME GUIDE.

The third volume of Jean-Marc Lofficier's Doctor Who reference trilogy will be entitled THE UNIVERSAL DATABANK.


DOCTOR WHO
Starring JON PERTWEE with PATRICK TROUGHTON and WILLIAM HARTNELL in THE THREE DOCTORS
By Bob Baker and Dave Martin
VHS HI-FI BBCV 4650
THE THREE DOCTORS
U
BBC

Time itself is in peril! The three Doctors are united against an old arch enemy...

Vital cosmic energy is draining into a black hole and the Timelords are under siege. The Doctor is their only hope but, trapped in the TARDIS, he's powerless. The only way out is to break the first law of Time to let the Doctor help himself – literally...

Originally transmitted 30th December 1972 – 20th January 1973, this special tenth anniversary adventure is available for the first time on BBC Video.

Running time: 99 mins approx

Produced by Barry Letts Directed by Lennie Mayne

Starring JON PERTWEE with PATRICK TROUGHTON and WILLIAM HARTNELL

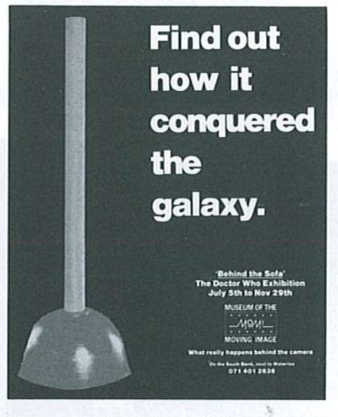
SUMMONED BY SHADOWS, the amateur science fiction production produced by the BBC Film Club - a society of BBC employees eager to gain more experience - and directed by 'Who fan Bill Baggs, is now available at £9.95 from BBV, 53 South Road, Beeston, Nottingham NG9 1LY.

Running at around 40 minutes, the story centres around a girl (Nicola Bryant) who is taken from her village by the Illusionist (Colin Baker), a strange Pied Piker like character. The girl's friend, Dane (Michael Wisher), a deaf and dumb artist, resolves to rescue her, but the Illusionist is more than he seems...

DWB has been voted 'Fanzine of the Year' by readers of DWM, winning over 30% of votes, with The Frame in 2nd place with 20%. Many thanks to our loyal readers who voted for us.

UNANIMOUS PRAISE AT M.O.M.I. LAUNCH

BEHIND THE SOFA, M.O.M.I.'s major new 'Doctor Who' exhibition, got off to a successful start on July 4th with the press launch (photo feature overleaf), and everyone present seemed unanimous in the verdict that the effort put into making it the biggest 'Doctor Who' exhibition ever had paid dividends. M.O.M.I. have already been besieged with enquiries following extensive publicity in major newspapers and magazines like 'Time Out' - in which this rather witty ad was placed - and expect it to become their biggest success yet.


Find out how it conquered the galaxy.
'Behind the Sofa'
The Doctor Who Exhibition
July 5th to Nov 29th
MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE
What really happens behind the camera
On the South Bank, next to Waterloo
071 401 2636

The exhibition is to run up to November 30th and tickets cost £4.95 for adults and £3.50 for children, or £15 for a family of two adults and four children. Discounts are also available for club bookings, and prices include admission to the M.O.M.I. complex as a whole.

Amongst the wealth of 'Doctor Who' merchandise available at the M.O.M.I. shop are four brand new and superbly designed T-shirts at £9.99 each.

X TERMINATE
HEAD SET

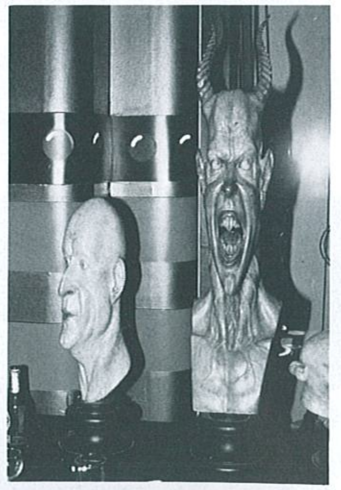
THE MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE's 'Doctor Who' weekend was also a great success, although hundreds of fans were left disappointed as the 200 tickets available were snapped up within 24 hours by BFI members who were the first to hear of the event via their BFI newsletter. While a second weekend is scheduled for November 2-3rd, priority will again be given to BFI members, so it would be advisable to enrol to the BFI to stand a chance of obtaining a ticket. Membership will also entitle you to the vast wealth of atractions offered by the BFI and NFT.

Unlike a standard 'Doctor Who' convention, M.O.M.I.'s weekend was designed to educate attendees by having each guest as a speaker and explaining how their capacity in the series functions, with around 40 minutes allocated to each person. This workshop approach to the event took into account the fact that at least half of the audience were not actually fans, but simply BFI members just interested in learning about the various processes of programme-making.

The Saturday started with a slide show by Jeremy Bentham, who explained about the history of the series from 1963 to present. Bernard Wilkie and Jack Kine, veterans of the BBC VFX Department, were next, and discussed the first ten years of effects work on 'Doctor Who', followed by Colin Baker who was hailed as the speaker of the weekend with his rivetting talk on life as an actor and the Sixth Doctor. June Hudson brought along some of her sketches and costume designs to illustrate her work within the series, and Carole Todd provided an interesting and honest account of the problems that plagued 'The Ultimate Adventure' during its opening nights in Wimbledon. The day was brought to a close with Nicholas Courtney.

Mat Irvine opened the Sunday continuing on from where his VFX counterparts had finished the day before up to the present. Fiona Cumming was next, explaining the rôle of the director, followed by Sophie Aldred who gave a lecture on the companions through the series. John Freeman then gave a talk on 'Doctor Who' in comics through the years, followed by sound veteran Dick Mills and prolific writer and script editor Terrance Dicks. The weekend very nearly came to an abrupt and disappointing end when the final guest, Sylvester McCoy, failed to show up, and just when JNT - MC for the occasion - appeared to have given up all hope, he finally boundered in and gave a breathless and rather disjointed account of his acting life.

MOVIE STILL GO?

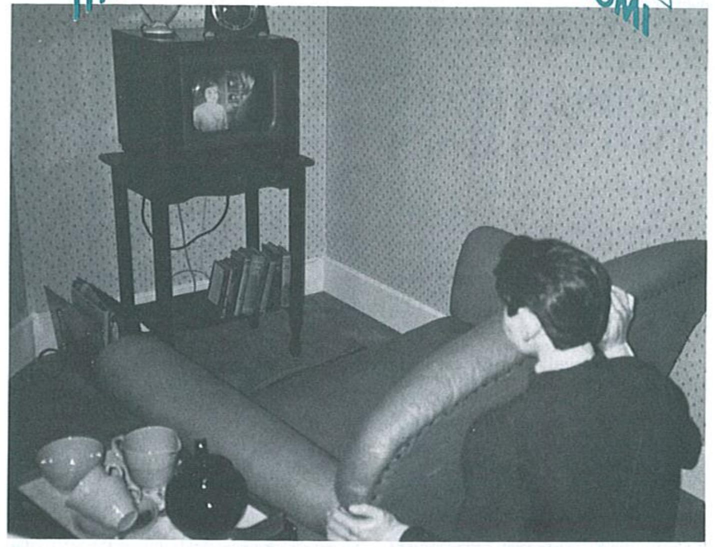


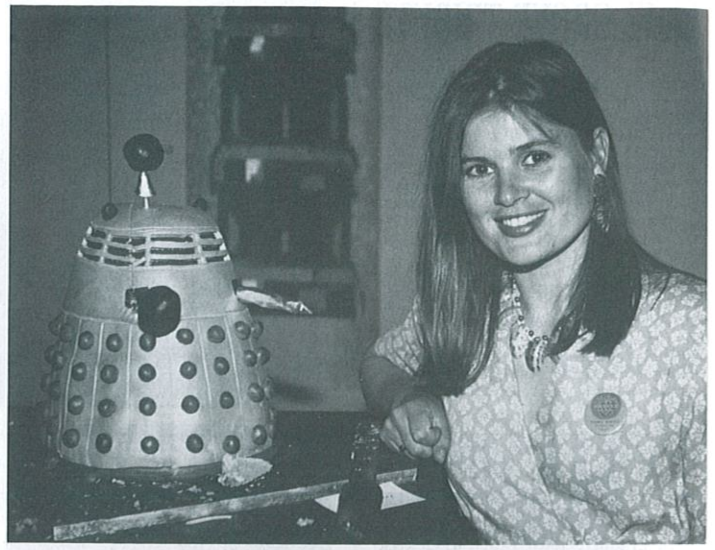
ONE OF the more interesting displays in the exhibition depicts three creatures from the supposed 'Doctor Who' movie, and the word from JNT at the press launch was that the 'Green Light' is still very much on, putting paid to the anticipated announcement regarding the series' future on television.

BEHIND THE SOFA

THE DOCTOR WHO EXHIBITION AT MOMI

PRESS LAUNCH: JULY 4



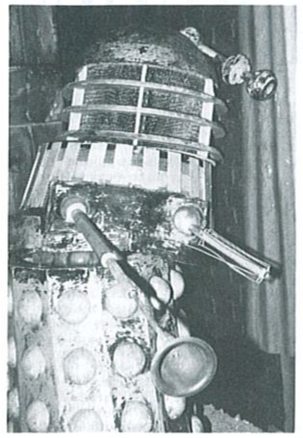


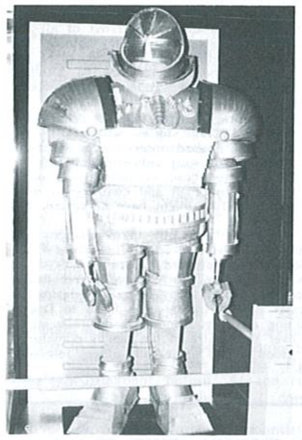
GUIDE TO PHOTOGRAPHS: (This page, anticlockwise from above) Deborah Watling and Nicholas Courtney, John Scott Martin, Bonnie Langford (on the right of photo), Sophie Aldred and Dalek cake, entrance to exhibition, K9, two actors posing as Gallifreyan hosts who will assist visitors and act as security guards for the museum.

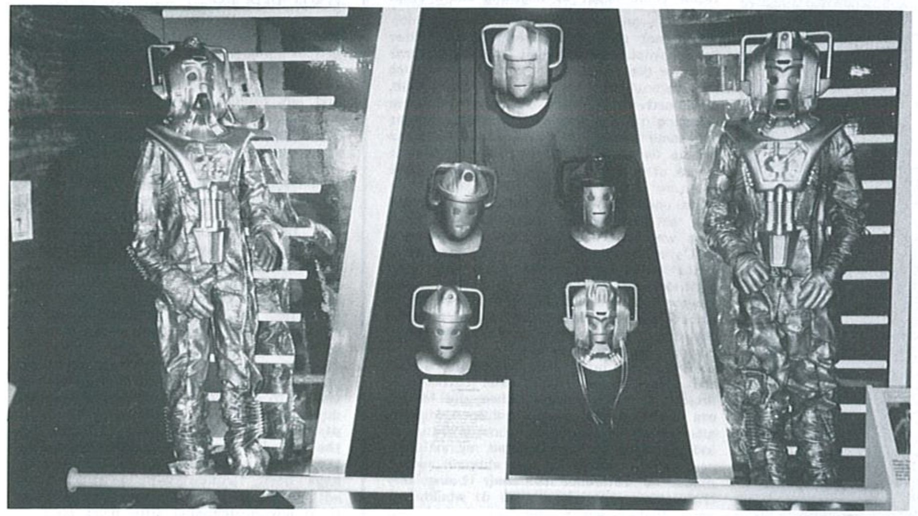
(Opposite page, left to right) a decapitated Dalek with an original 1963 base, Ice Warrior, Yeti, Axon, Sea Devil, Giant Robot, Mummy case (**Pyramids of Mars**), Mandrell, Melkur, Silurian, cave monster (**Caves of Androzani**), Cybermen, Davros, Cutaway Dalek, Gundan, Vervoid and Sea Devil. All props and costumes are original, with the Ice Warrior and Yeti dating from 1967.

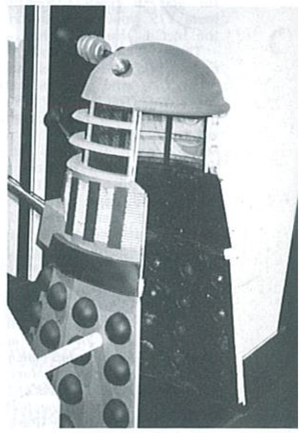
Other exhibits include the following: Mestor, The Garm, Tetrap, Omega #2, a **Mindwarp** tableau and props and displays from **The Stones of Blood, The Leisure Hive, Dragonfire, Battlefield** and **The Curse of Fenric.**

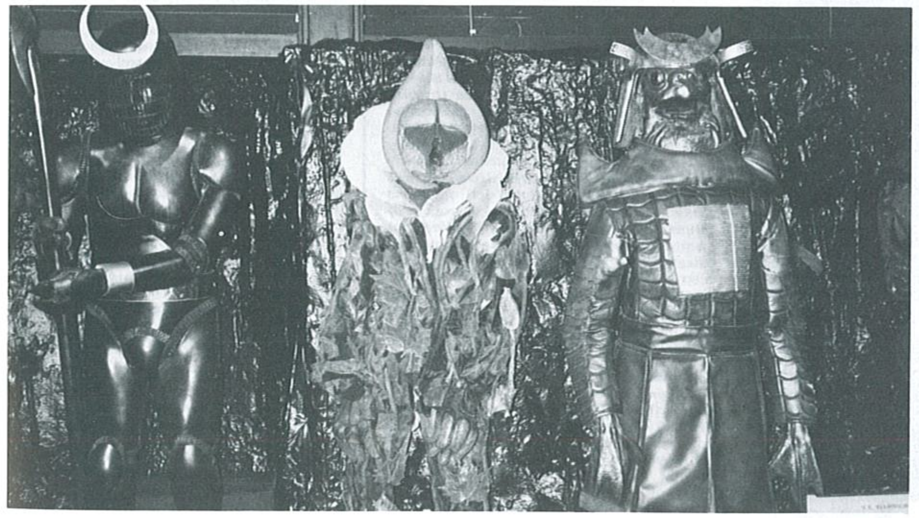
Photos (c) Tony Clark and Gary Leigh.

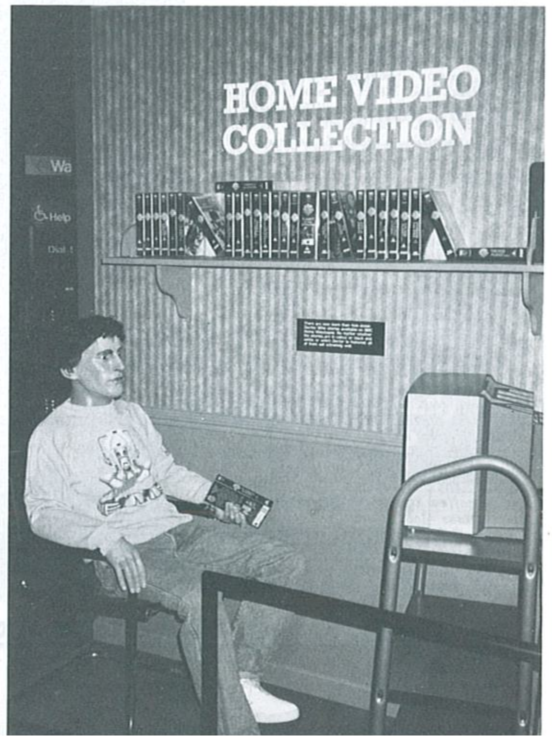












IS D W M REALLY JNT'S MOUTHPIECE?

CONTINUING OUR OCCASIONAL SERIES IN WHICH WE, THE CONSUMERS OF DOCTOR WHO-RELATED PRODUCTS, AIR OUR VIEWS AND GRIEVANCES DIRECTLY AT THE PRODUCERS, THIS ISSUE WE TURN THE SPOTLIGHT ON MARVEL's D W M WHO ARE ACCUSED OF EDITING SUBMITTED MATERIAL TO SUIT THEIR EVER-PRESENT "ADVISER"...

WHEN DOCTOR WHO MAGAZINE celebrated its 150th issue, I realised the time had come for me to stop buying the thing on a regular basis to try and keep my blood pressure down. It was one thing for a magazine to be supportive of a dying programme, but another to openly promote John Nathan-Turner as the single force behind the series and no other.

It seemed to me to be a tragedy the direction the magazine was fated to take. John Freeman's tenure as editor started off magnificently with a sudden rise in quality of design and journalism after the disastrous slump in written content and general look during Sheila Cranna's reign. Freeman also introduced a policy of using new writers and rare photographs and dealing with obscure subject matter. He expanded articles into several parts over a number of editions rather than condensing an article on, for example Hartnell design, into four or five pages.! Material seemed to be covering new ground and the type print was getting smaller and smaller, allowing greater depth for an article which, up to then, only a fanzine could achieve. Richard Marson was quickly phased out...

But it seemed clear that the infamous influence of JNT (in his guise as "Adviser"), that had created howls of outrage from Doctor Who fans who suggested that the magazine was becoming his mouthpiece, was growing, boosted by sycophantic articles, interviews and reviews. Once in a while there would come a damning review of a story (**Silver Nemesis** by David Howe, for example), but that would become very rare indeed...

It became most dominant in the Season 25 survey results in the 150th issue with "I'm delighted" slipping into every paragraph with JNT voted as best producer, having his seasons voted as the greatest ever and the hint that DWM was not very happy with Tom Baker still being seen as the best Doctor...

When a JNT story was faulted, it would be buried in an article such as "Doctor Who Turkeys" in the December '88 issue where **Time and the Rani** and **The Twin Dilemma** were highlighted as not quite so good but **The Invisible Enemy**, **Invasion of Time** and **The Underwater Menace** as tripe. I wondered at the time whether the writer was around in 1967 to be able to have an objective opinion about the Atlantis Troughton story, or whether he was just basing his "facts" on what he had read in the fan press. Previous era stories were chastised for having bad effects. When **Underworld** and **The Invisible Enemy** are eventually released on video it will be seen that there is more to Doctor Who than special effects, which is something I don't think JNT ever realised...

Today, the problem with DWM is much more pronounced. They are rapidly running out of ideas. Convinced that the series is merely "on hold" with Sylvester McCoy ready to grab his brolly again, John Freeman is desperately trying to keep the interest in McCoy alive in a manner that no other editor of the magazine has ever done before (in comparison with their respective eras). He seems obsessed with the legend of the seventh Doctor, trying to create his own ideas for the series and making the McCoy interpretation valid and good for JNT! Any editor who rakes up the TARDIS log from the early eighties with the excuse that there is a new generation of fans out there who don't have access to these ancient, hallowed issues (while forgetting that one of Peter Haining's cash-ins - The Time Traveller's Guide - printed almost the same thing!), ought to move onto pastures new. A greater "crime" was the re-printing of the Console Guide from issue 78 in a much shorter form, and with all the inaccuracies intact: "Door switch often used by the first Doctor". Really? Must have been in one of the missing episodes. Controversy Corner is another waste of time. Regeneration or rejuvenation? Is the central column the Time Rotor?...

A disturbing trend is how the magazine likes to knock the dedicated fan who wishes to complain about present-day Doctor Who and ridicule them. It's a Them and Us attitude which manifested itself in the recent article on Myths of the Doctor Who World, some of which came directly from DWB! Tom Baker is, of course, an under-rated buffoon and his stories over-rated.

The most recent issue published (at the time of writing) is June's where we see a blatant waste of space, namely the extracts from Timewyrm: Genesys. Will we get this every time a new set of books are published? No other book has had this privilege except for David Bellamy's superb work on his late father's Who art, Timeview. It seems a waste of time and a con, and a huge advert for W.H.Allen. Surely a much more valid "celebration" of brand new McCoy fiction would have been to interview John Peel and the other writers of the Timewyrm sequence? It wouldn't surprise me if John Freeman was to announce he was going to write a McCoy novel and give it the same promotion akin to Dave Rogers' co-written Avengers novel Too Many Targets in Stay Tuned.

A McCoy episode guide is next on my list of criticisms. This is something we just **don't** need. There has been so much coverage of the McCoy episodes that this is simply a space filler. The magazine is failing to cover the spectrum of Doctor Who. Surely with the video releases there is ample material to examine? For John Freeman's regime it is either Hartnell or McCoy these days. There is no balance. The middle five Doctors are shunted to one side, given the odd mention.

Evidence has been submitted to DWB that bias in DWM is alive and well with articles re-written or cosmetically treated to change the emphasis of the article, chunks edited out (to make way for photographs?) and criticisms of McCoy stories with "in my opinion" tagged alongside. Surely what a writer says is **his** opinion but it seems we have to be reminded. Or JNT has to be reminded...

The interviews are covering old ground yet again, but this time they are swift and less than objective. Louise Jameson is dragged up yet again with several paragraphs on Doctor Who to make its inclusion valid. The last time she was interviewd by the magazine Sheila Cranna gave her a Woman's Own style cover, but at least the contents of that 1988 interview was balanced between Who and non-Who and raised some interesting gossip about Tom Baker along the way! Here, as in the recent Wendy Padbury interview, it seems as if they were not in the least bit interested in digging up Who memories from these two talented actresses (especially considering that a number of their stories are now available on video). The same, however, does not apply to the Anthony Read interview. It was virtually the same as appeared the first time round in 1986! Perhaps John Freeman wants interviews about things other than Doctor Who, but does the fact-thirsty reader?

Gary Russell still provokes storms of outrage when he dares to suggest that **The Krotons** is not quite a classic while **City of Death** and **Planet of the Spiders** are heaps of crap. That is allowed presumably because Peter Bryant and Barry Letts aren't "advisors" on the magazine. However, when Gary Russell reviewed the less-than-fantastic novel of **Mindwarp**, he thought that out of all the JNT stories this was his least favourite. The "in my opinion" tag was out! Mind you, I do recall chuckling over the **Warriors of the Deep** review in issue 88 which he described as "a flawless classic"?! And why are stories not worth watching if the effects are bad (i.e. **The Chase**)?

If black and white and seventies stories can be condemned, dismissed or ridiculed, why not JNT stories without "in my opinion"s inserted? In the Eric Saward interview to promote **Attack of the Cybermen**, the famous split between JNT and the ex-editor was mentioned but watered down considerably to imply that Saward has nothing against the man and contrary to what both interviews in Starburst and DWB might have suggested. But that is, of course, their opinion.

Am I over reacting? Perhaps I am. But these thoughts are shared by a lot of people who have expressed disquiet over the latest issues of DWM and who have decided to call it a day. And I am willing to lay odds that a lot of you have had severe doubts over the recent over-priced, flimsy copy of DWM trying to convince you that Sylvester McCoy has brought more to Doctor Who than sneers, over-acting and a question-mark umbrella whilst JNT continues to reside over the centre of the rapidly diminishing Whoniverse that once stood proud over all other television programmes in the world.

Michael Seely

WHEN I WROTE to DWB a few months ago enclosing several unsolicited articles for you to read, I mentioned that DWM issue 175 would be printing an appraisal of the McCoy era that I had written.

Today (11/6/91) I have seen the printed article and I feel must issue a warning to other fans who may be considering writing for DWM. The fact of the matter is that my article has been censored to remove valid criticisms which I made about the McCoy era, especially about season 25. When I received my complimentary issue and read the article I noticed that vast chunks had been re-writtem, whilst other parts had been omitted altogether. I therefore printed out a copy of my original text, which I enclose, and have highlighted the principle omissions and changes:

"The poor quality (sic) of the scripts, combined with the general comedic approach gave fuel to the growing anti-JNT campaign. JNT has always enjoyed a love/hate relationship with the fans, and season twenty-four polarised fandom. It was distressing to watch and the sheer poison and vitriol involved left a nasty taste in the mouth..." (Paragraph ends).

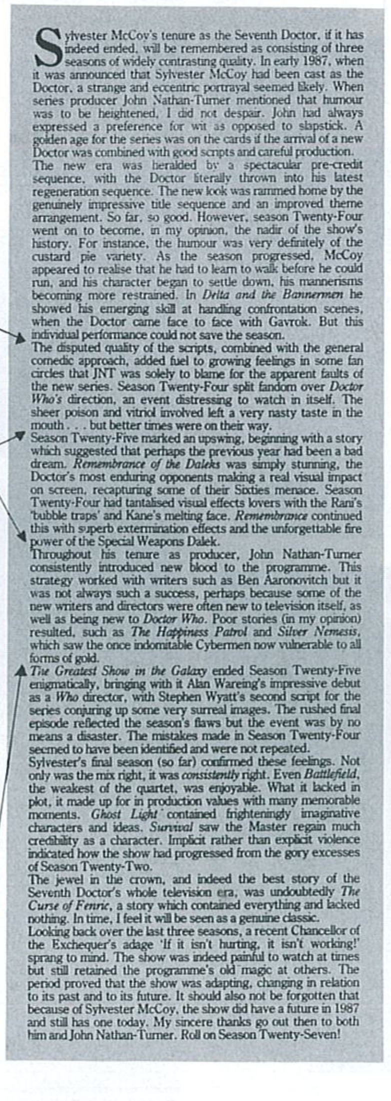
"Throughout his tenure as producer, JNT consistently introduced new blood to the programme. With Aaronovitch and the writers for season twenty-six it worked, but all too often this strategy failed. Part of the reason seemed to be that the new writers and directors were often new to television itself, as well as being new to Doctor Who. The result was a number of tacky, poorly executed stories. This description fits The Happiness Patrol and Silver Nemesis in particular. The former was, in my opinion, exactly the sort of story that would have been produced if the writer had only ever had season tenty-four for reference. The clever-clever satire of Thatcherite Britain could not disguise poor acting and a poor script. Can you imagine a less imaginative name for a planet than Terra Alpha? As a silver anniversary story, Silver Nemesis was no cause for celebration. Once again, an inexperienced writer was chosen. The result being a farce. Silver Nemesis was set in November, a month not famous for hot sunny days and open-air jazz concerts! Then we have the Cybermen, whose credibility was all but destroyed by a now total vulnerability to all forms of gold. I was surprised that the script did not contain the Cybermen being slain by having coffee thrown at them. The reason? Well it was Gold Blend! To top it all, we have an investigation into the character of the professor, SORRY!! The Doctor... All well and good, but when such an investigation is carried out with lines of the calibre of "Doctor...Who are you?", the result could never be anything but a crass disaster."

Whilst not denying the right of an editor to edit material, it seems a little extreme to say the least to tone down and to remove what I saw as being valid, constructive criticism. Could it have anything to do with the fact that in the self-same issue of DWM there was an article written by JNT himself? In the words of Private Eye, I think we should be told...

Up until this point I had scorned what I saw as mindless criticism of DWM from fans who had accused it of being merely JNT's mouth-piece, seeing them as extremists and as being blinkered in their attitude towards the show. No more however. I regard myself as being a sincere fan of Doctor Who having watched the show from season eleven onwards. I do not see myself as being rabidly anti-JNT or being against any particular era of the show and, as the original text of my article suggests, I approached the McCoy era with an open mind. An open mind is also what I expected from DWM and, indeed, after I had submitted my article I received a letter of acceptance which made no reference to their being any unsuitable material. Whilst I would not deny that I wrote the appraisal in an upbeat, optimistic fashion, the resultant editing has made it appear to be the work of a member of the (ex) Doctor Who production team! Consequently I feel that I must distance myself from the article as it stands, and also it seems from DWM.

I hope that you can find space to print this article in DWB as your publication seems to offer the only platform where anti "establishment" views can be openly expressed. With the programme currently in stasis, what is required from fanzines and magazines is a forum for open and above all honest debate. I wrote my article for DWM with this at the forefront of my mind and genuinely feel somewhat betrayed and disillusioned with what has been printed. This is not a case of sour grapes on my behalf, indeed I was paid for the article several months ago, but I feel that DWM is doing itself no favours by pretending that all was well with Doctor Who during seasons 24-26. I hope that the censorship of my article is not indicative of a general decline in the magazine. Few can have been pleased with the "special" TARDIS issue and the fact that the pointless "regeneration/rejuvenation" debate has been exhumed. What next...the revival of the Mondas/Telos debate? I sincerely hope not.

Duncan Harvey



Sylvester McCoy's tenure as the Seventh Doctor, if it has indeed ended, will be remembered as consisting of three seasons of widely contrasting quality. In early 1987, when it was announced that Sylvester McCoy had been cast as the Doctor, a strange and eccentric portrayal seemed likely. When series producer John Nathan-Turner mentioned that humour was to be heightened, I did not despair. John had always expressed a preference for wit as opposed to slapstick. A golden age for the series was on the cards if the arrival of a new Doctor was combined with good scripts and careful production.

The new era was heralded by a spectacular pre-credit sequence, with the Doctor literally thrown into his latest regeneration sequence. The new look was rammed home by the genuinely impressive title sequence and an improved theme arrangement. So far, so good. However, season Twenty-Four went on to become, in my opinion, the nadir of the show's history. For instance, the humour was very definitely of the custard pie variety. As the season progressed, McCoy appeared to realise that he had to learn to walk before he could run, and his character began to settle down, his mannerisms becoming more restrained. In *Delta and the Bannermen* he showed his emerging skill at handling confrontation scenes, when the Doctor came face to face with Gavrok. But this individual performance could not save the season.

The disputed quality of the scripts, combined with the general comedic approach, added fuel to growing feelings in some fan circles that JNT was solely to blame for the apparent faults of the new series. Season Twenty-Four split fandom over *Doctor Who's* direction, an event distressing to watch in itself. The sheer poison and vitriol involved left a very nasty taste in the mouth . . . . but better times were on their way.

Season Twenty-Five marked an upswing, beginning with a story which suggested that perhaps the previous year had been a bad dream. *Remembrance of the Daleks* was simply stunning, the Doctor's most enduring opponents making a real visual impact on screen, recapturing some of their Sixties menace. Season Twenty-Four had tantalised visual effects lovers with the Rani's 'bubble traps' and Kane's melting face. *Remembrance* continued this with superb extermination effects and the unforgettable fire power of the Special Weapons Dalek.

Throughout his tenure as producer, John Nathan-Turner consistently introduced new blood to the programme. This strategy worked with writers such as Ben Aaronovitch but it was not always such a success, perhaps because some of the new writers and directors were often new to television itself, as well as being new to *Doctor Who*. Poor stories (in my opinion) resulted, such as *The Happiness Patrol* and *Silver Nemesis*, which saw the once indomitable Cybermen now vulnerable to all forms of gold.

The Greatest Show in the Galaxy ended Season Twenty-Five enigmatically, bringing with it Alan Wareing's impressive debut as a *Who* director, with Stephen Wyatt's second script for the series conjuring up some very surreal images. The rushed final episode reflected the season's flaws but the event was by no means a disaster. The mistakes made in Season Twenty-Four seemed to have been identified and were not repeated.

Sylvester's final season (so far) confirmed these feelings. Not only was the mix right, it was *consistently* right. Even *Battlefield*, the weakest of the quartet, was enjoyable. What it lacked in plot, it made up for in production values with many memorable moments. *Ghost Light* contained frighteningly imaginative characters and ideas. *Survival* saw the Master regain much credibility as a character. Implicit rather than explicit violence indicated how the show had progressed from the gory excesses of Season Twenty-Two.

The jewel in the crown, and indeed the best story of the Seventh Doctor's whole television era, was undoubtedly *The Curse of Fenric*, a story which contained everything and lacked nothing. In time, I feel it will be seen as a genuine classic.

Looking back over the last three seasons, a recent Chancellor of the Exchequer's adage 'If it isn't hurting, it isn't working!' sprang to mind. The show was indeed painful to watch at times but still retained the programme's old magic at others. The period proved that the show was adapting, changing in relation to its past and to its future. It should also not be forgotten that because of Sylvester McCoy, the show did have a future in 1987 and still has one today. My sincere thanks go out then to both him and John Nathan-Turner. Roll on Season Twenty-Seven!

JOHN FREEMAN, EDITOR OF MARVEL's D W M, REPLIES:

I was very sorry to hear of Duncan Harvey's dissatisfaction with the way his article was edited for publication in Doctor Who Magazine. I am even sorrier to hear of his dissatisfaction through DWB and not through comments made directly to me - something I found incredibly unprofessional, particularly in view of the accusations made.

For the record: Duncan's article was well received by several readers of the Magazine and, despite the editing - which was our prerogative in accepting the piece and to make it acceptable for final publication - I feel the article lost none of its comment or purpose. The general drive of his piece on the McCoy era was left intact. His praise of both JNT and Sylvester McCoy at its end was only slightly edited so it read better than the original.

What was cut? Specifically deleted was one line about "JNT's love/hate relationship with the fans". This was adequately covered in the final article which, instead of passing over the split in fandom over the show's direction, sought to outline those differences for readers who may not have been familiar with as they would with the stories in question. This is something any professional title must do since it is constantly picking up new readers and we have no wish to leave them floundering in a sea of miscomprehension.

Also cut was a rambling passage criticising **The Happiness Patrol** and **Silver Nemesis**. This was simply edited to indicate Duncan's opinions of the stories, but the fact that he did not like the stories was not removed - so exactly what is the problem here? The comments in your article have been stated in past reviews (for example, in DWM issue 146 which contained not the most positive piece about **Silver Nemesis**), in the DWM letters page and in countless other fan and professional publications. We assume (perhaps wrongly) that our readers have seen the stories in question and will have their own opinions about them. Certainly comments on the show and particular stories have had a far greater airing than an outline of fandom's split over the McCoy years.

Admittedly, in the early part of the article, we did replace the words "poor scripts" with "disputed quality of the scripts". The latter is a statement, the former an opinion with which many continue to disagree - which was one of the points of mentioning the fandom split in the first place, was it not?

To conclude, we were solely responsible for the edits to the published article in issue 175 prior to its approval (for licensing reasons) by John Nathan-Turner. Whether you, DWB or any fan of the series likes it or not, the BBC have approved John's continuing position as the adviser to the magazine. We have had our differences - it would be wrong of me not to say so. But compared with the assistance John has given the magazine, compared with the work and energy he put into the programme - no matter how the results of that work was perceived - these differences have been minor.

As evidence of our ambivalence and our relationship with Mr. Turner, I must point out that DWM has published critical material of the McCoy years on many occasions, as it has printed critical material of many other periods. As the current editor, an apparent lack of 'teeth' was one of the obvious criticisms made about past issues of the title and a criticism I sought ro redress when I took over the job. I have also introduced a much wider range of writers over the last three years, a development I believe has paid off in terms of presenting a lively commercial package that does not seek to patronise its readership, takes into account a wide range of differing views and maintains interest in Doctor Who while it is sadly off the air. I always welcome reading either solicited or unsolicited material from new writers and, time allowing, I try and make comments about the best of it to the writers concerned. It's a shame that in this case it has been done through the pages of another publication.

I hope that despite Duncan's feelings about the way the piece appeared, this will not prevent him from continuing to submit material, despite the comments about our generally well-received TARDIS Special and somewhat catty remarks about Controversy Corner. Remember - every issue of any magazine is a first issue for someone and although you are obviously a long-term fan of the series, some people may never have come across Richard Landen's argument before. At the risk of exposing myself to ridicule, I certainly hadn't!

As for Mr. Seely's feature, he's entitled to his own views and as an addition to suggestions for new features in DWM in our most recent poll, it arrived on my desk at an opportune moment. We're in the process of planning issues into 1992. However, the feature raises a number of points which I must take issue with. In response, perhap's it's best to treat each comment in order as I see them, but overall it's interesting to note that although Mr. Seely stopped being a regular DWM reader with issue 150, he seems very conversant with the magazine's contents!

Fixed Poll: Once again, DWM is falsely accused of 'fixing' the poll in issue 160 which voted Sylvester McCoy favourite Doctor. This is totally untrue and I sincerely hope DWB will disassociate itself from these accusations - otherwise, what value is there in its position in this year's poll as favourite fanzine?

It's unfortunate that some fans cannot accept that the majority of DWM readers do not regard JNT as the Anti Christ - and indeed appear to have no real interest in this debate at all. The show itself - in all its generations - is more important. Fact: John Nathan-Turner was voted favourite producer. John was producer of the show for ten years and is still involved with the show's promotion, despite the apparent lack of interest in its future on the part of the BBC. That is **fact**. As for John's "I'm delighted" response to all sections in the poll in issue 150, if some people don't recognise a joke when they see one, perhaps they ought to start watching Voyage To The Bottom Of The Sea to get them back into the swing.

No damning criticism: Excuse me, but if you're in the business of covering a programme as a commercial publication, it's hardly in our interest to pursue the same rottweiler-style tactics of a non-profit making fanzine. Having said that, I'm a firm believer in constructive criticism, not disparaging, negative, "It's all JNT's fault" nonsense. As Mr. Seely points out, damning criticism has appeared before but he ignores the letters page completely, which has been a battleground over **Battlefield** and many other stories - and a reflection, just like DWB's letters page I'm sure, of its own post bag.

Running out of ideas: Sadly, Mr. Seely seems totally oblivious to another simple fact that, until the BBC tells us differently, Sylvester McCoy and Sophie Aldred's portrayal of the Seventh Doctor and Ace remain 'the current team', whether they're coming back or not. That's part of Marvel's licence agreement, just as Virgin have published New Adventures featuring the pair. Looking back over the issues under attack - yes, there is a wealth of Seventh Doctor material. Funnily enough, these issues seem to coincide with Seasons Twenty-Five and Twenty-Six. Just who was the Doctor then? Oh yes, the person everyone was watching continue the show, you know, the one with the daft jersey and Scottish accent... I could take any selection of issues under other editors and say they'd concentrated too much on one Doctor - except that the Doctor they concentrated on would be the one currently on TV.

This particular comment is the most bizarre part of this feature. Whilst in no way wishing to criticise past editors who perhaps worked to tighter budgets than DWM has today, a simple comparison with past eras of the title should reveal a continued range of material, more writers and the use of new photographs (where available, since much excellent material has long since disappeared under mysterious circumstances from the BBC Photographic Library). In addition, a number of readers specifically requested the McCoy Episode Guide, to add to the Colin Baker one run a few years ago. Equally, we continue to run a series of posters by Alister as requested at numerous conventions and in the same polls.

The TARDIS Special: Given the response to our back issues advert, the surveyed age range of our readership and requests in the three recent polls in DWM (though, of course, we are supposed to have fixed these), information on the TARDIS was one of the most requested items. The Console Guide was not a straight reprint: it was checked by Andrew Beech and Jan Vincent Rudzki and the original writer, Richard Landen supplied detailed corrections indicating information culled from non-TV sources in the original guide, which was deleted from the revision. OK, we missed the Fast Return Switch - but that was covered in the archive... If Controversy Corner is a waste of time, why is it attracting almost as much correspondence as Gary Russell's wicked, nay blasphemous, criticisms of old stories?

Knocking fans: The letters page is the place for fans to knock each other around, and that's just what they do. Duncan Harvey's piece gave a fair appraisal of the McCoy years and none of its drive was removed, despite protestations to the contrary to which as yet I have had no reply. Do you really think that Tom Baker is an over-rated Doctor? Who do you like?

Interviews: You can't have it both ways on this. You say the interviews cover old ground - yet it's clear both from the readers and at conventions that many Doctor Who fans are **not** as familiar with the series and the people involved as the regular fanzine writer or reader. It's a matter of striking a balance and we have only what the actor/creator tells us to work with. It's never a perfect mix but the point is taken.

Timewyrm: Ah, I see it's alright for DWB to preview the New Adventures but not DWM. I think you'll find that people were more concerned in June with wondering whether it was worth shelling out £3.50 to read John Peel's **Genesys**; and our taster in issue 175 gave them opportunity to do just that without extra cost (if of course they bought DWM on a regular basis). For those interested, interview material with the New Adventures writers is to be featured soon in 'Off the Shelf', and Jon Peel kindly supplied his own introduction to our extract.

Reviews: If you ever bothered to submit an article to DWM, this paragraph would have been edited, not censored. In the form sent to us it was gibberish. And now we're going back as far as issue 88 to sling some mud. Pardon me, but I only started work on DWM (as designer) with issue 131.

Saward Interview: As far as I know, Mr. Saward made no mention of his much publicised split between himself and John Nathan-Turner when interviewed about **Attack of the Cybermen** by Gary Russell.

Your last comments are your own opinion, so here's mine. As the show's then producer, it's not surprising John (NT) was interviewed for DWM on numerous occasions. How can a magazine hope not to be accused of bias when the person you seem to love to hate is so closely involved with the series? If Philip Hinchcliffe (for example) took over tomorrow, would we then be biased because we talked to him and took advantage of that relationship to expand our coverage on the series' production? It **would** be a very poor DWM editor who did that. In order to cover the makings of the show in the detail to which our readers expect, it makes sense to be on talking terms with the production crew. Any opinions about the final product the DWM production team may have are of no concern to fans rightfully hungry for the

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ISSUE 42

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JUST WHO ON EARTH IS TOM BAKER?

TOM BAK
1934

ROBERT COPE reviews the latest release in ReelTime's *Myth Makers* series

IT HARDLY seems two years ago that I wrote so enthusiastically *[DWB #65]* about the first Tom Baker *Myth Makers* release, an event I judged at the time to be pretty rare. How wonderful it is then to have the pleasure of a sneak preview of the follow-up tape from ReelTime entitled "Just Who On Earth Is Tom Baker?", a chance we are told to find out more about the man behind the characters.

Filmed in and around Tom's picturesque home in Lenham, Kent, with Tom's third wife Sue Jerrard at the helm as director, the video is a strange combination of opinions and a chance to amuse with hilariously funny anecdotes. I think all of us who have seen and met Tom would have to put him on our guest list for the Ultimate Dinner Party. Like many other guests I would have on that imaginary list, Tom is highly intelligent, has a sense of the wicked and outrageous, remains enigmatic to his admirers yet at the same time is compelling, more so as a conversationalist than an actor these days.

In this particular slice of life according to Tom Baker we are witness to perhaps the pinnacle of schizophrenia — he is both the interrogator and the interrogated. He dons several guises to interview himself — my favourite is the bespectacled fan-like interviewer, which must be Tom's way of giving a sly two-fingered salute to the type of fan who would ask the "What's your favourite story?" type of question. The almost Adrian Mole look he assumes reminds me of many a fan of Doctor Who that I've met on my travels, and who is to say that I'm not a little like that myself?

His anecdotes are, as always, compulsive entertainment — he tells the story of the taxi driver who mistook him for Jon Pertwee — and he positively glows when recounting his early days in Liverpool and the baffling omnipresence of God to the five year-old Tom Baker. There is no doubt that there is a touch of the insane about Tom at times, and it must run in the family : "My grandmother believed passionately that monkeys could talk," he says casually. You get the feeling that like the great Barnum before him, he could well be 'The Prince of Humbug', but the fun is trying to detect where fantasy ends and reality begins with Tom. I doubt he knows himself. With a twinkle in his eye he declares that his contribution to the war effort was collecting salvage, which led to his enduring affection for rubbish … Yes …

Talk about his time as Doctor Who is kept to a minimum but it doesn't really matter because that would just slow down his torrent of half truths and opinions. Had Tom not cornered the market in lucrative voice over work during the past few years, I'm convinced that he could have made a living in chat shows and after-dinner speaking. "The standard of begging has declined terribly," he comments. "I long to be stopped by a beggar who says, 'Excuse me guv, can you spare me twelve quid for a bottle of champagne?'"

The direction is very nicely atmospheric throughout, with shots ranging from the graveyard to cycling around the village and feeding the birds. The copy I saw was not the final edit and minus Mark Ayres' music, but I'm sure these will enhance the photography, adding the icing to the very rich cake.

One of the things that seems to come over most of all is Tom's great affection for his fans; we may not see him at every convention, but nevertheless it is clear that Tom regards his fans as an essential part of him. "Without the fans I am nothing," he concludes, and it is an attitude that another actor I could name would do well to emulate. He gives a symbolic reading from A Christmas Carol — reputed to be one of his favourite pieces of literature — and finishes off the 50 minute exercise to divert and amuse his audience with a simple thank-you to his fans, a pleasing end to an extraordinary video.

Once again Keith Barnfather and co. have come up with a vastly entertaining and occasionally thought-provoking video, and I venture to suggest that it will be an important addition to the memorabilia of those like myself who can vividly recall the hey day of Doctor Who during the 70s; the multi-coloured scarf and jelly babies may be with us no longer but, thank goodness, the brilliance of Tom Baker still is.

As for that Ultimate Dinner Party — Tom Baker, your place is set and I await your arrival. What would you like with your chips?

PRIVATES ON PARADE

Buxton Opera House, June 1991

Robert Cope

IF YOU were a fan of the Perry/Croft series of the 70s *It 'Ain't 'Alf Hot Mum* then I would venture to say that Colin Baker's latest theatrical outing could be the one for you. Set in the Malayan jungle and Singapore in 1948, Peter Nichols' award-winning musical play tells the story of a bunch of young soldiers recruited to SADUSEA — Song And Dance Unit East Asia — and their hilarious efforts to put on shows combined with the more sombre effects of being in a country where communists could strike at any minute.

Commissioned and first performed by the Royal Shakespeare Company in 1977, *Privates on Parade* was based on Peter Nichols' own army days with ENSA and a company which included the film director John Schlesinger, comedian Stanley Baxter and Carry On star Kenneth Williams. It must have been quite a hoot because *Privates* is for the most part an exceptionally funny evening, although most of the humour is in a camp vein. Music for the show was composed by Denis King, veteran of many major musicals and a perfect choice to parody the sort of tunes being commonly heard during the 1940s.

The characters we meet are wonderful comic studies, such as Len Bonny who can't say a word without effing and blinding (played with just the right amount of drollness by Matthew Line). Then there is Charles Bishop, direct from the medical corps and superbly played by Richard Waites whose limp wrist whilst on parade causes much hilarity. Stalwart member of the *It 'Ain't 'Alf Hot Mum* cast John Clegg (Gunner Graham) plays the religious nut Major Giles Flack in a quiet, understated way, but has his own moments not least during the title song when he steals the show with a dance straight from the ministry of silly walks. Topping the bill along with Clegg is a drop-out from Home and Away, Peter Vroom (Lance Smart) who plays the stiff-upper-lip Eric Young-love; he has certainly got stage presence but unfortunately his accent tended to sound more German than English. It has to be pointed out that this is a very adult production with some strong language and a certain amount of nudity (I don't think even the horrors Davros created could compare to the sight of Peter Vroom wandering around the stage without a stitch on!).

This brings me nicely to Colin Baker as the central comic character, Captain Terri Dennis, a man who makes John Inman look like Hulk Hogan. Resplendent with hair dyed vivid blond, Colin brings the house down with a series of one-liners guaranteed to offend at least some of the middle-class theatre going public. "Speak to an officer like that again and I'll scream the place down!" he cries in full screech, and he refers to all the menfolk as women; thus Giles becomes Gillian, Reg becomes Regina and Eric becomes Erica. This is the fourth play I've seen Colin in and it is without doubt my favourite so far; he excels in the part — his impressions of Marlene Dietrich, Vera Lynn, Carmen Miranda and the like have to be seen to be believed. The production unquestionably needs a few quid spending on it, but having seen the show with three hard-bitten colleagues from the theatrical profession, I think it comes as some recommendation when they say that they haven't enjoyed themselves for ages. By and large it is a talented company that works hard for nearly three hours of top-notch entertainment, but, without wishing to seem sycophantic, the evening belongs to Colin Baker giving what might well turn out to be the comedy performance of his career.

Colin leaves the show in mid-August before being replaced by Danny La Rue; with all respect to the latter, I just cannot see him bettering Colin's performance. Dates and venues are subject to change, so I suggest you watch your local press for details. Suffice to say that any true Colin Baker fan shouldn't miss this one for all the tea in China …

DOCTOR WHO
Starring
TOM BAKER in
THE MASQUE
OF MANDRAGORA
By Louis Marks
VHS
HI-FI
BBCV
4642
THE MASQUE of MANDRAGORA
DOCTOR WHO
U
THE MASQUE of MANDRAGORA
Produced by Philip Hinchcliffe
Directed by Rodney Bennett
BBC
Starring
TOM BAKER
5 014503 464226

When a wave of Mandragora energy hitches a ride with the TARDIS to 15th century Earth the Doctor and Sarah Jane's troubles are only just beginning. Caught up in a power struggle for the Dukedom of San Martino and the mysterious ancient cult of Demnos, the Doctor's scientific expertise is really put to the test.

A darker force is beginning to glow, gaining power after centuries of waiting in the shadows. And it must take over the Earth when the evil of Mandragora swallows the moon ...

Originally transmitted 4th - 25th September 1976 this adventure is available for the first time on BBC Video.

Running time: 99 mins approx

BBC Video; £10.99

John Ainsworth

FLEXIBILITY IS often cited as the reason for Doctor Who's longevity. Over the years, the series has explored a wide variety of formats with greater and lesser degrees of success. The pseudo-historical is a sub-genre in which Doctor Who has consistently hit the mark, and *The Masque of Mandragora* is a prime example of this.

The Mandragora Helix is a personification of the story's basic premise — that astrology is not just a nonsense, that there is a power in the stars. Louis Marks arrived at this concept by applying what he described as "Doctor Who thinking", and indeed one can see immediately how appropriate this idea is to the series. Renaissance Italy provided the perfect setting for the serial, being something of an historical turning point, as well as being visually stimulating.

Fifteen years have passed since the serial was first shown. Watching it today, one is pleasantly surprised by the simplicity and clarity of the plot, quite a contrast to the series' latter-day offerings. The story comprises of three main plotlines : Mandragora, the cult of Demnos and the unscrupulous Count Federico. At the tale's beginning, Federico is very much the major threat, but as the plot unfolds and Mandragora combines with the brethren of Demnos, the focus slowly shifts to Mandragora. By the end of episode three, Federico is eliminated entirely and for the remainder of the story local politics are forgotten and the emphasis is entirely on defeating Mandragora.

Interesting parallels can be drawn between the characters of Hieronymous and the Doctor. Whereas Guiliano and Federico remain constants of 'good' and 'evil' throughout the story, the Doctor and Hieronymous shift from itinerant and lackey at the beginning of the story to saviour and would-be conqueror at the conclusion. As Mandragora's influence over the community of San Martino increases, so does respect for the authority of the Doctor and Hieronymous as their own particular 'talents' come into their own.

Hieronymous is probably the most interesting character in the story. The exchanges between the astrologer and Federico are used to illustrate the change in Hieronymous's character as both his ambition and power grow. Federico's closed mind fails to recognise this and ultimately this is his undoing as he falls foul of his former servant.

According to Louis Marks, the director, Rodney Bennett, takes his work very seriously, and *The Masque of Mandragora* is no exception to this. Bennett extracts fine performances from all of his cast; John Laurimore as Federico and Norman Jones as Hieronymous are particularly worthy of comment, both portraying their respective parts with total conviction.

Elisabeth Sladen, in her penultimate story, had by this time long since perfected her portrayal of Sarah Jane Smith. By this time Sarah was displaying a greater degree of tolerance and understanding of the Doctor's moods, born of familiarity. Nowhere is this better displayed than in a delightful scene in episode four where the Doctor is carrying out complex calculations and Sarah avoids disturbing him by tip-toeing back to her seat and reading her book. If nothing else, Sarah has learnt patience during her travels with the Doctor.

Tom Baker's portrayal of the Doctor had also matured in a most pleasing way. The Doctor's relaxed, up-front approach to new situations with nothing but a smile imbued the character with a child-like innocence that never fails to win the audience's sympathy. It is hard to believe that only a year later the same actor would be portraying the same character as a smart talking buffoon.

As excellent as *The Masque of Mandragora* is, it does contain a few clangers. Probably the worst offender is the 'cockney' Italian guard. This wouldn't be quite so offensive if it wasn't for the fact that, firstly, it is embarrassingly obvious that the accent is affected, and secondly, none of the other guards have remotely similar accents. On the effects side, however, the complaints are minor. The fireball of helix energy seen in episode one doesn't really work as it is a video effect superimposed on film. In the following episode, Mandragora performs a miracle before the brethren of Demnos by recreating their ruined temple around them. This effect is achieved by the use of lights on hanging drapes and painted gauzes and, although quite ingenious, it is, I feel, a form of trickery more effectively used in the theatre. These criticisms are, however, very minor points and by no means do they detract from the overall effect of the serial.

Aside from being an excellent story, *The Masque of Mandragora* is also noteworthy for making two major contributions to the Doctor Who 'mythos'. In the opening moments of the programme we are presented with a new, wooden, console room, which according to the Doctor is in fact the original. The main production reason given for replacing the old set was that the mechanics of the time rotot were too unreliable. Unfortunately this is probably why the new look was not well received. The moving central column of the TARDIS console is as much a part of the Doctor Who 'image' as the police box exterior; losing this removed something uniquely unidentifiable from the programme.

Mandragora's second mythos contribution is of course the infamous gift of the Time Lords that allows the Doctor and Sarah to understand any language as if it were their own. I am quite certain that whoever included this line, be it Marks, Holmes or Hinchcliffe, did so thinking that they were finally plugging a hole in the logic of the series. However, this well-meaning culprit cannot possibly have considered all of the past and indeed future ramifications of this simple action. why couldn't the Doctor understand the Foamasi in *The Leisure Hive*, for example? But this is a debate for elsewhere; suffice to say that perhaps it would have been wiser to have left well alone.

The Masque of Mandragora comes from a period that could justifiably be described as the golden age of Doctor Who. Baker and Sladen are widely regarded today as having portrayed the most successful Doctor and companion respectively. The scripts of this period were consistently good, neither talking down to their audience nor leaving them behind, lost and confused. Most of all, the production of the series was taken seriously with all involved giving their utmost just as they would if it were any other drama production. *The Masque of Mandragora* typifies this 'golden age' perfectly; its faults are few and minor. It is an excellent choice to be released on video. Buy it.

BATTLEFIELD

PETER LINFORD reviews the last of Target's Doctor Who tv novelisations for the foreseeable future

IT HAS often been said that no one can realise a script in book form as well as its original author. After reading *Battlefield* I'm not so sure. I'm no great fan of either the *Remembrance* tv story or its novelisation, nor, like most people, was I greatly enamoured of the transmitted *Battlefield*, but Marc Platt's novelisation is a damn good read.

How much of it is still Aaronovitch's I've no idea, but the book hangs together so well that it hardly matters, and you might well think that Platt had written the story in the first place. There are still a few loose ends, like how Mordred and Morgaine are to be contained and what will be done with them, and neither is it terribly clear why the warriors from the parallel universe are fighting this battle on earth instead of on their own planet, but resolving that one might have involved rather more drastic changes to Aaronovitch's tale than was permissible.

Although he adds quite a lot of material of his own, Platt is basically very faithful to the script. Most of the additions to the actual story are at the beginning, opening with the laying to rest of Arthur in the spaceship, the recall from Zambezi of Brigadier Bambera and a superbly written storm sequence which sets a wonderfully bleak tone for what follows and, for once, gives wider implications to the action than merely the effect on those directly involved — something rarely considered in Doctor Who. Unfortunately this is lost as the rest of the story seems to take place mainly in fine sunshine.

Platt has broken the story up into four 'parts' which are in fact exactly the transmitted episodes. Quite what the point of this is I don't know, as the sections are not really distinct.

Something Platt does which I am in two minds about is reference the future. (Like Aaronovitch, he makes it clear that the UNIT stories are regarded as contemporary — Liz Shaw's UNIT pass expires in 1975.) This is all very well. Perhaps we shall be playing the Russians at cricket, overlooking a bay in Chichester or bemoaning wallabies in Cornwall, but after a while it felt overdone.

Definitely not overdone, but skillfully achieved, is the characterisation of the Doctor. Characters as a whole are very gently drawn in this book, but the Doctor is significant in that, contrary to his portrayal in the last couple of seasons, he is here quite definitely not a man in control. He spends much of the time at a loss, responsible for actions he has yet to commit, and so the emphasis shifts from a straightforward good guys v bad guys tale to the story of a man grappling with his own destiny. It is thus that the inadequacies of Aaronovitch's original plot are overcome. Worth mentioning also is Ace. For once we have a fighting side that is not harmonious. Bambera and Lethbridge-Stewart do not get on, and neither do the latter and Ace, whose responses to being described by him as 'the latest one' are almost sexual in inference.

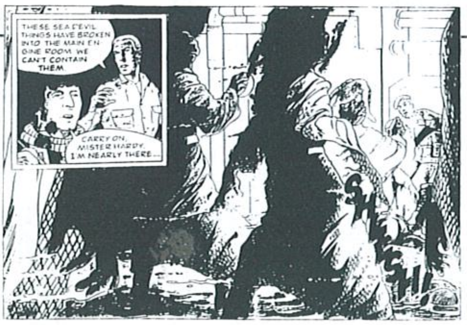
Editor Peter Darvill-Evans has been keen to stress that his *New Adventures* books are aimed at adults. He might do well to point out that what has been going out under his editorship thus far, if *Battlefield* is representative, can hardly be described as aimed at children. (This is no criticism — it is most welcome, and I do not share some readers' and writers' reservations about the new series.) *Battlefield* has references and terminologies which are hardly kids stuff (how many young readers will follow the significance of a 'five pound ecucoin'?), and Ace is finally allowed on occasion to speak as a real eighties teenage thug would speak, rather than in the woefully strained and unconvincing manner that television dictated.

Target books have come on in leaps and bounds since I stopped buying them. In fact *Battlefield* was so good I might even think about starting again.

The Doctor Who Yearbook

Marvel Comics; 64pp; £4.50

David Gibbs


THESE SEA DEVIL THINGS HAVE BROKEN INTO THE MAIN ENGINE ROOM. WE CAN'T CONTAIN THEM.
CARRY ON, MISTER HARDY. I'M NEARLY THERE...
SHSH!!

THIS TAKES me back. It must be a good five years or more since the last Doctor Who annual from World Distributors found its way into the remainder piles at WH Smiths, and although Marvel have taken pains to not call their latest release the 1992 Annual, that is, of course, what it is.

It's different, of course. No one expected Marvel to follow the same kiddies format so 'successfully' adhered to by World Distributors for twenty years, especially now that Doctor Who is no longer on our screens and the whole audience for this kind of material has grown up. So out go the 'A is for Asteroid' features, the crosswords, the Not-Ludo-At-All-Oh-No board game (usually hiding under a disguise such as Escape From Planet X, or Vanquish the Vardons, to make it look exciting in the contents), and even the amazing predictions of what life will be like in the year 2003. (Has anyone taken a look at the 1974 annual recently? Some of its predictions for a 'space-age Christmas' are really quite accurate. We're not yet singing carols in orbit, though.)

In the place of these old friends come the new features. The last couple of annuals gave a hint of this — behind the scenes features, looking at costumes or special effects — but now such articles are in the majority, relegating the text stories to a couple of sides a piece. There are four in all, by such illustrious names as John Lucarotti, Marc Platt, John Lydecker and Colin Baker, each featuring one Doctor, namely numbers one, two, five and six. The other three are represented in a sixteen page comic strip, narrated by the seventh Doctor as he tells Ace how his third and fourth incarnations *almost* but not quite came to meet one another (and in the process explaining a 'continuity error' from *The Five Doctors*). This strip is real vintage annual material, piling cliché upon cliché, illustrated by faces either pulled directly from well-used reference photographs or else bearing almost no resemblance whatsoever to the actor concerned — Jon Pertwee comes off particularly badly here. I must say that considering its pedigree I was expecting a bit more from the comic strip, but as I say, it's just like old times as far as the annuals are concerned.

I'm at a bit of a loss as to what audience this book is actually aiming at. There's a lengthy introduction by Stephen James Walker concerning the origins of the programme, and an equally lengthy article by Gary Russell giving an overview of the show's history (in typical opinionated Gary style, no surprises there, but I reckon he was a bit hard on Davison). Now these are both very well written, and excellent introductions to Doctor Who, but they stand rather awkwardly alongside a twelve page episode guide detailing writer, designer and director credits together with format held in the archives, date of transmission, audience figures, etc. And the printing of the original series outline as handed out to prospective script writers in 1963 is manna to the hard core fans, but will it mean much to the casual reader? Perhaps I'm being a bit harsh here. Instead of falling between two stools, perhaps it actually manages to satisfy both types of reader simultaneously. Certainly I think anyone who hasn't read similar accounts in the fan press will find the *Curse of Fenric* behind-the-scenes feature fascinating, and the fiction will equally appeal to all. I just wonder whether a quarter of the book given over to a rather technical episode listing (not even plot synopses for most stories) has mass-market appeal.

Despite many fans' fears, the first Doctor Who Yearbook is not just an expanded, hardback edition of Dr Who Monthly. There are no interviews, archives or 'reviews of the year' (of the kind seen in the old DWAS Yearbooks). The writers chosen are among the very best to be featured in DWM, although it's a shame that the same couldn't be said of the comic strip. If I had to make one criticism it is that, inevitably, the feel is still that of the magazine. The same typeface and format as DWM has been used throughout, which means that a nagging feeling of deja-vu lingers in the mind all the way through. The *Fenric* features apart, the contents are generally quite different from the run-of-the-mill DWM issues, but the visual style does tend to remind you that you're reading an, admittedly expanded and different, issue of DWM.

It's been too long since the last Doctor Who annual. The new Yearbook is not perfect but in many ways it towers above its predecessors. Those of us of a certain age will always long nostalgically for the days of lengthy text stories, appalling quizzes, puzzles and astronomy features, but at least we still have the comically unrealistic illustrations of the Doctor and co. And for the rest, the Doctor Who Yearbook is worthy complement to the Marvel magazine.

The Doctor Who Yearbook is published by Marvel Comics, price £4.50 (US $8.95), at the end of July.

EVERY CLOUD . . .

IAN WHEELER defends *Silver Nemesis* against all-comers

ALTHOUGH NOT as universally disliked as *Time and the Rani* or *The Twin Dilemma* (both well defended in recent issues of DWB), *Silver Nemesis* has had more than its fair share of flak since its original showing in 1988. Some of the criticisms have perhaps been slightly unfair, and it is time to redress the balance.

Silver Nemesis was intended as a celebration of 25 years of Doctor Who, and on that level it works well. The plot itself is not as complex as Stephen Wyatt's *The Greatest Show in the Galaxy* or Ian Briggs' *The Curse of Fenric*, but it is no less exciting. In common with traditional stories like *The Seeds of Death*, the Doctor has a number of elements to deal with — in this case the Cybermen, the Cyberfleet, Lady Peinforte and De Flores. Kevin Clarke presents us with some superb characters and situations. Most worthy of comment is the final confrontation, giving us suspense and genuine tension. And, of course, we are once again forced to ask "Who is the the Doctor?", providing a perfect spring-board for Season 26.

Chris Clough's direction is fully appropriate for an action-adventure story of this type. Some have suggested that Mr Clough struggles somewhat with more surreal stories like *The Happiness Patrol*, but in *Silver Nemesis* he is in his element. The battle sequence at the beginning of part two is particularly memorable, as is Ace's Cyber-encounter in part three.

The acting in *Silver Nemesis* is far superior to anything in Season 24. Those in smaller roles, such as Leslie French (Mathematician) and Metin Yenal (Karl), all give competent performances. The late Anton Diffring's portrayal of De Flores is magnificent. Here is a man who will stop at nothing — a man ten times more evil than Gavrok or the Rani. De Flores must rank as one of the most intriguing villains in Doctor Who's history, right up there with Michael Jayston's Valeyard. It is very sad indeed that he can never return.

The other main human adversary, Fiona Walker's Lady Peinforte, is also well portrayed, and Gerald Murphy as Richard provides some effective humour. The real focus of attention, however, is the Cybermen, looking quite stunning in their new-look costumes. Although not as effective on location as they are within the confines of a spacecraft (as in *Earthshock*), they are still among the greatest of Who monsters. It is rather a pity that the Cybermen are so easily destroyed, but they are still by far the best choice of enemy for such an important anniversary.

Inevitably it is the two regulars, Sylvester McCoy and Sophie Aldred, who steal the show. Sylvester perhaps fails to reach the heights of his performances in *Remembrance of the Daleks* and *Ghost Light*, but he is still excellent and it is hard to believe that this is the same Doctor who confronted Kate O'Mara and Richard Briers a year before. There can be no question in my mind as to Sylvester's abilities. He is the definitive Doctor and if he fails to return to Doctor Who the programme will never be the same again. Sophie's interpretation of Ace is just as good, making the character the most believable companion ever. We can sympathise with her completely.

Special effects for this story are excellent. The model work of the Nemesis comet moving through space springs to mind, and the Cyber-ship lands in a rather more convincing fashion that its Bannermen counterpart one year before. As expected in a McCoy story, there are plenty of explosions to keep everybody happy, although the best effects will have escaped most people's attention, including some excellent Paintbox work such as that used on Lady Peinforte's house.

Keff McCulloch's incidental music cannot go without mention (let's be honest — you can't miss it!). Keff's contribution may have seemed slightly out of place in Season 26, but no man could have made a better job of this one. His *Nemesis* score is modern and thrilling. His theme arrangement (surely the best so far) is also perfect for this type of story.

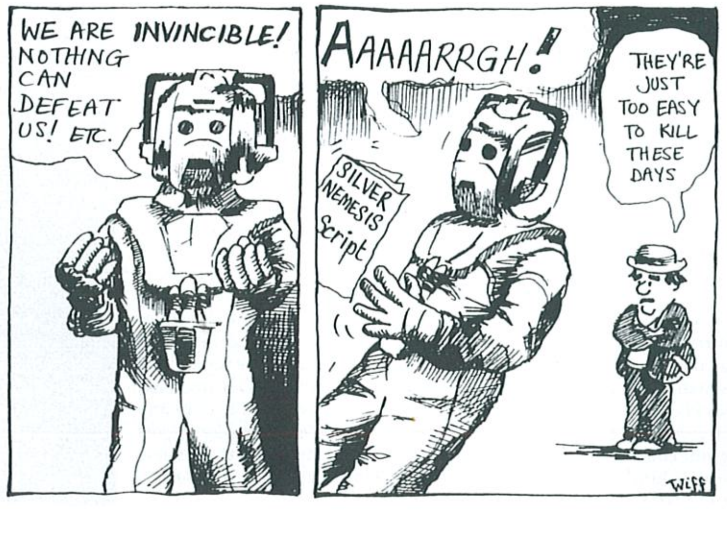
Looking at the story overall, the whole thing is really very watchable indeed. It has all the elements of good Doctor Who — convincing acting, monsters, villains, drama, humour, action and a strong central Doctor/companion team. It is more than worthy of being Doctor Who's 25th anniversary adventure and is by no means the weakest component of the *Dragonfire/Silver Nemesis/Curse of Fenric* trilogy.

In visual terms, *Silver Nemesis* is perhaps the most stylish story of the McCoy years. It successfully captures the essence of the Pertwee era with all the excitement of a James Bond film.

I never cease to be amazed by Who fans' dislike of this story. With the general public it was far more popular than most other McCoy stories as ratings and (more importantly) AI figures show. Certainly my own friends considered it to be far superior to stories about Kandymen and holiday camps.

So, what exactly is wrong with story 7K? As has often been pointed out, it could have been better as a four-parter. Perhaps it is also true to say that Kevin Clarke was not as comfortable with Cybermen as Ben Aaronovitch was with the Daleks. The real reason for this story's failure was that unfair comparisons were made. It was compared to *Earthshock* and *Remembrance of the Daleks*, two very highly rated stories. It was also part of a generally excellent season. Had it been the last story of Season 24, it would have done very well.

Whatever its faults, *Silver Nemesis* was exciting, thought-provoking television, far better than anything Star Trek — The Next Generation can offer. With BBC Video promising more stories from recent Doctors next year, we can only hope that *Silver Nemesis* will be released in an extended form so it can finally be judged in a more objective way.


WE ARE INVINCIBLE! NOTHING CAN DEFEAT US! ETC.
AAAAARRGH!
SILVER NEMESIS Script
THEY'RE JUST TOO EASY TO KILL THESE DAYS
Wiff

DWB assistant editor David Gibbs has this intriguing idea for a new series of reviews. Any takers?

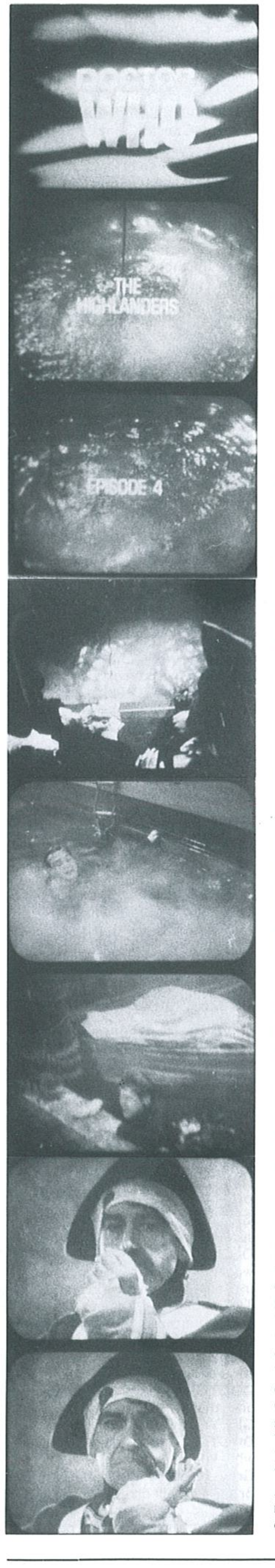
Gary — is this guy for real? I mean, this has got to be a wind up, right? "... perhaps the most stylish story of the McCoy years ... successfully captures the essence of the Pertwee era with all the excitement of a James Bond film ..."

Still, live and let live, and all that. Might I humbly suggest that this Defend-a-Turkey column, which I must say I think is a great idea (I'm all for defending long-hated stories, as I tend to enjoy most Dr Who, except for some of the mid-late 80s stuff), has rather begun to get stuck in a rut. Pick a story that everyone hates, make outrageous claims about its script/FX/acting/whatever, ignore all its defects, and slag off any established "classic" that comes to hand.

An idea for a slight variation: a few years back The Listener ran a regular feature called 'Schlock-watch" in which contributors wrote for a page on their favourite piece of trash tv — Prisoner Cell Block H, Neighbours, Time Tunnel, etc — extolling the virtues of watching this trash without actually making any false claims for it being *good*. For some time now I have thought that it might be fun to run a column wherein people can say what tacky Dr Who story they enjoy watching, whilst still conceding that it's full of holes and really rather bad. (Personally I'd rather like to do The Time Monster like that — I mean, it's *appalling*, but very very watchable. Same goes for The Horns of Nimon. But that's neither here nor there.)

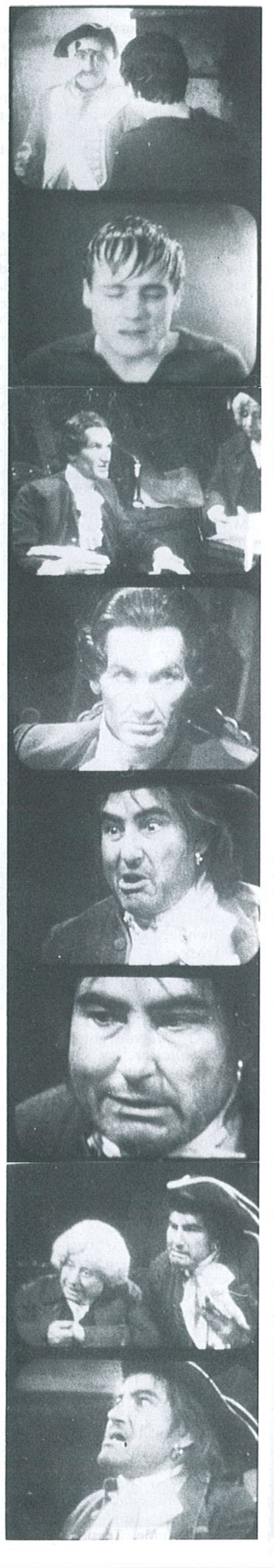
I don't know if you agree with me here, but I do feel that if you got the right writers for the job (I'm thinking here of people like Paul Cornell, Tat Wood, Nick Pegg or Ian Levy) it could work very well indeed. You need to get good writers, of course, for it to work, people who can make valid points whilst still being entertaining, people with a sense of humour (which, with respect, a lot of younger fans seem to lack) and, perhaps more importantly, wit.

Am I being too ambitious here? Am I misreading the whole ethos of DWB? It's just that I feel that a few articles that are enjoyable to read just for the quality of writing rather than (necessarily) just what they're saying would make a nice change.



The still water is suddenly broken as Ben bobs up to the surface. For a moment it appears that he is unconscious, but thankfully his lifeless state is due to the exhaustion of freeing himself from his bonds while under the water. Slowly he strikes out for the shore, panting with each laboured stroke. He eventually reaches the quayside and hauls himself up onto dry land. He lays back to catch his breath and groans at the sight of an approaching British soldier. He is too exhausted to even think about making an escape:
Oh no, not after all that. I give up!
The soldier pauses before him and tugs at his moustache, which comes away in his hand.
BEN: It's you Doctor!
DOCTOR: Of course. Who else would be walking round the jetty dressed as a soldier that had been wounded in battle?
BEN: You've got a point there, but why?
The Doctor delivers his reply in a cockney accent:
Coz I like it 'ere. And besides, it keeps the other soldiers away.
Ben starts to shiver:
I'm cold and hungry.
DOCTOR: I know just the place.
He holds up his musket:
First let me put this on board the boat.
He motions towards a rowing boat covered by an old tarpaulin.
BEN: Boat?
The Doctor pulls back the tarpaulin to reveal a vast arms cache:
Just a few wee gifts for our friends aboard the Annabelle.
Ben gazes down in amazement.

Grey, Perkins and Trask are sitting in the brig of the Annabelle. Laid out in front of them are the signed contracts from the Scottish prisoners. Perkins waves his hand over the documents:
There sir, duly signed and attested. It just wants your signature.
GREY: Not before time.
Grey dips his quill pen into a small pot of ink and signs the documents. Trask, well on his way to being drunk, gets up and starts to stagger around the brig:
A little wine for your cold heart, lawyer?
GREY: I never mix liquor with business, and I would advise you to do the same. You sail on the morning tide, remember?
TRASK: Happen it's too foggy to sail. What then?
GREY: You sail, fog or no fog.
TRASK: And crash the timbers on Chanonry Point?
GREY: I took you for a seaman.
TRASK: Aye, that I am.
He starts to laugh drunkenly:
Trask 'll get your cargo of little beauties to Barbados, never fear. That's what really counts, not those dried up bits of parchment of yours.
GREY: Without those bits of parchment, we'd all sail foul of the King's law.
TRASK: Law? What does the law, or anyone, care for those highland cattle we're carrying?
GREY: But to take these cattle safely to the slave market - before their strength is sapped in His Majesty's prisons - that takes skill and preparation.
TRASK: And what would happen to you if this trade were to be discovered?
GREY: That will never happen. There are only three of us privy to this secret. I can answer for myself and Perkins.
PERKINS: Yes sir, indeed you may.
GREY: As for you, Captain, you must answer for yourself.
Trask laughs:
All but in jest. You know me, solicitor, I'm your man.
GREY: Aye, and that is the way you will remain . . . Mr. Trask.



Ben, Polly, Kirsty and the Doctor are assembled in the barn. Ben is wrapped in a blanket and is tearing off chunks from a large loaf of bread:
Ah, that's better. I never thought I'd live to see a meal like that again.
POLLY: How did you manage to get loose? Under water I mean.
BEN: It's the old Houdini trick, duchess. You flex your muscles when they tie you up, and when you're ready you relax 'em. Well, that way you're half the size you were before. Get it?
POLLY: And that's all there is to it?
BEN: Well almost all.
The Doctor emerges from behind a pile of straw wearing his frock coat and hat.
POLLY: Hey, you've got your own clothes back!
DOCTOR: Can you imagine, I found them thrown out on the rubbish dump behind the inn!
BEN: Mine should be dry by now.
POLLY: I liked you better in your dress, Doctor!
KIRSTY: You made a good granny!
The Doctor clears his throat:
Now then, do we all know what we have to do? Ben?
BEN: Yeah, I take you out to the ship in the rowing boat, then double round the back smartish while they're sorting you out and pass the weapons through the porthole.
POLLY: While Kirsty and I just sit here and wait for you to get back! If you ever do. No fear, we've done enough waiting!
DOCTOR: But it may be dangerous. They may not swallow my story.
BEN: Yeah, and they may see me in the boat. Even with this on.
He pulls on a large tom-o'-shanter.
DOCTOR: I would like a hat

like that.
POLLY: Nevertheless, we're not going to let you out of our sights. You get into such terrible trouble.
DOCTOR: Very well, you can come in the rowing boat. It might be a good idea at that.
BEN: Well, what do you want me to do now?
The Doctor smiles:
I've another idea for you Ben.

The hold of the Annabelle is full of sleeping prisoners. Jamie, MacKay and the laird sit away from them at one end.
MACKAY: I can hardly believe it. They played right into Grey's hands, my own crew amongst them.
LAIRD: Can you blame them? It's a poor choice between the gallows and the plantations. A man will clutch at any straw to save his skin.
JAMIE: What will they do with us?
LAIRD: I'm afraid they'll make an example of us once Trask gets away to sea.
MACKAY: He'll no' let me live, that's for sure. Better a fast death than a lingering one under the overseers. I've no regrets.
LAIRD: If I could see my Kirsty again, I'd die content.

Grey and Perkins are just finishing totting up the payments they can expect when the prisoners are sold as slaves.
GREY: Three thousand five hundred guineas. You will collect this amount in gold on delivery of the prisoners and render strict accounting to me. Is that clear?
PERKINS: Er, yes sir, Mr. Grey sir. Perfectly, you may trust me to the death.
GREY: I must return ashore. I shall expect to see you in London at the end of October. Meanwhile, keep a close eye on Trask.
There is a commotion at the cabin door and Trask enters flanked by two soldiers, each clasping the Doctor's arms.
TRASK: We've got company Mr. Solicitor. Caught him coming over the side, bold as a Welsh pirate.
The Doctor speaks in his German accent:
I came of my own free will. Delighted to meet you again, solicitor Grey.
GREY: You won't be so delighted when we part company this time.
DOCTOR: Get these nasty fellows to let go of my arms. I have a small token for you.
GREY: Indeed? I have not forgotten the last one. Alright, let him go.
The sailors release their grips.
TRASK: Let me have him, I'll soon change his tune.
DOCTOR: Where did I put it? Let me see...
He rummages through his pockets:
No, it's not there. I put it in this pocket...perhaps it's here...
GREY: You had better find this token quickly, before I leave you to the tender mercies of Mr. Trask.

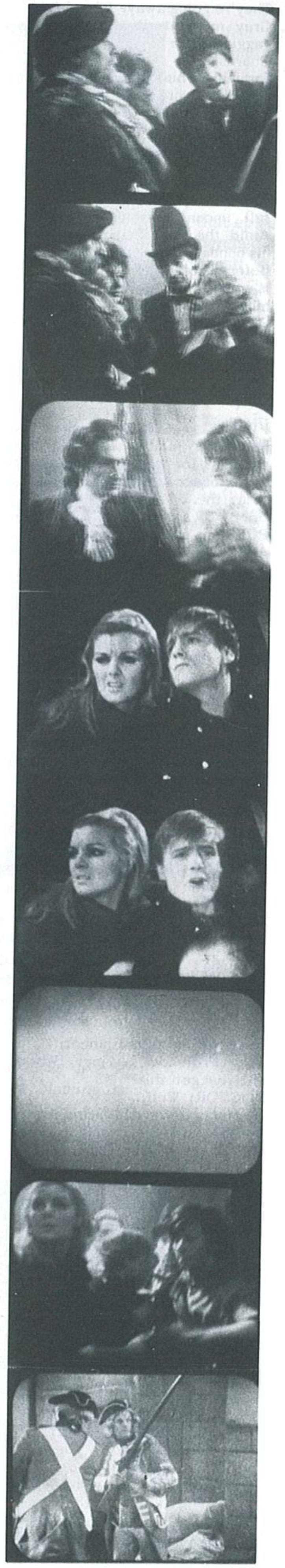
DOCTOR: Got it! There we are. Look at this.
The Doctor places Kirsty's ring on the table. Grey speaks quietly:
The Stewart arms! Where did you get this?
DOCTOR: From the hand of Prince Charles himself.
GREY: Where?
DOCTOR: In prison.
GREY: I don't follow.
DOCTOR: It's perfectly easy. Prince Charles disguised himself as a highlander and was taken prisoner with the rest of them.
GREY: Where is he now?
DOCTOR: I wonder what that information would be worth?
GREY: How much do you think it to be worth, Doctor?
DOCTOR: Well, let me see. Ten thousand guineas.

Rowing the boat through the heavy fog, Polly and Kirsty draw up alongside the Annabelle. Kirsty leans through a porthole:
Father, father.
The laird stirs, half asleep:
My child.
KIRSTY: Father, listen to me.
LAIRD: I must be dreaming.
KIRSTY: Shh, keep your voice down.
The laird's eyes strain in the dark:
Where are you?
KIRSTY: Outside.
LAIRD: My child, are you well? They haven't harmed you?
KIRSTY: I'm alright, and you?
LAIRD: Better, a world better for hearing your voice, but you canna stay here, they'll find you.
Kirsty passes through a pistol:
Take this.
LAIRD: It's a miracle. I must be in a dream.
KIRSTY: It's no dream. We've got arms for all of you, and a plan. Now come a little closer and listen.

GREY: You drive a hard bargain Doctor, but no matter, I agree. Now, where is he?
DOCTOR: The very last place you would think of looking.
GREY: Well?
DOCTOR: Right here on this ship.
Trask reaches for his sword:
Let me have him!
GREY: A dangerous jest, Doctor.
DOCTOR: Did you mark the young highlander who was with me? The piper.
GREY: The piper?
DOCTOR: With soft hands and face. Did you notice his hair? Unmistakable. That was the Prince.
GREY: You had better be very sure.
DOCTOR: Do you think I would come and place myself in your hands if I was not?
TRASK: We'll smell out the pretender right now, by heaven.
GREY: Come on then.
Grey, Perkins and Trask start to leave.
DOCTOR: Aren't you forgetting one thing?
GREY: What?
DOCTOR: I'm the only one who knows what he looks like.
Grey turns to the sailors:
Bring him along, make haste.

Down in the hold, the prisoners are 'sleeping'. The hatch to the hold is unlocked and opens.

TRASK: In here Doctor.
GREY: Quiet! If they have any suspicion who we know to be here. Come on Doctor...
The group moves silently through the ranks of sleeping Scots.
...Well?
The Doctor shakes his head:
No.
Trask points to one of the prisoners:
What about him?
DOCTOR: Perhaps he's farther over.
GREY: If you have made a mistake, Doctor.
DOCTOR: I've found him.
He indicates that they should join him at the far end of the hold. As Grey and his party start to advance, the hold erupts with armed Scots. The two sailors run for the ladder up to the deck but, finding their way blocked, drop their swords. Grey and Perkins are also cornered, but Trask draws his cutlass and fells one of the highlanders with a single blow. MacKay takes a huge lunge at Trask and the two engage in a fierce battle. Jamie points to the ladder:
Follow me!
The prisoners stream up onto the deck and the clash of swords fills the hold. MacKay has become weakened by Trask's frenzied onslaught and falls back as the captain strikes his arm with a fierce blow. Trask makes a run for the ladder, calling up to his sailors:
To me, boys. I'm still the master here...
Ben jumps into view.
...You! I'll make sure of you this time.
Ben fends off Trask's blows, but the old sailor proves himself to be the better swordsman. Just as Trask prepares to deliver his final thrust, Jamie swings down on a rope from the forecastle and kicks him over the side into the freezing waters below. The sailors, seeing their captain disappear into the murky depths, lay down their weapons. MacKay clutches his arm:
Hold hard! Stop fighting all of ye. We sail for France on the next tide. If you don't volunteer, you've got a long cold swim for it. Right now, make ready.
The Doctor emerges and looks over the side. He waves to the two girls below and leans down to help them up onto the deck.
DOCTOR: There we go.
POLLY: Well done, we've won.
DOCTOR: For the moment.
POLLY: What do you mean?
BEN: Well, the real problem's only just beginning. We've got to get back to the TARDIS with only a rough idea of where it is and the whole English army out to stop us.
POLLY: What are we going to do?
BEN: We're going to get ashore before they get underway, that's for sure. Right Doctor?
DOCTOR: Right.
MacKay shouts to his crew:
Stand by capstan.



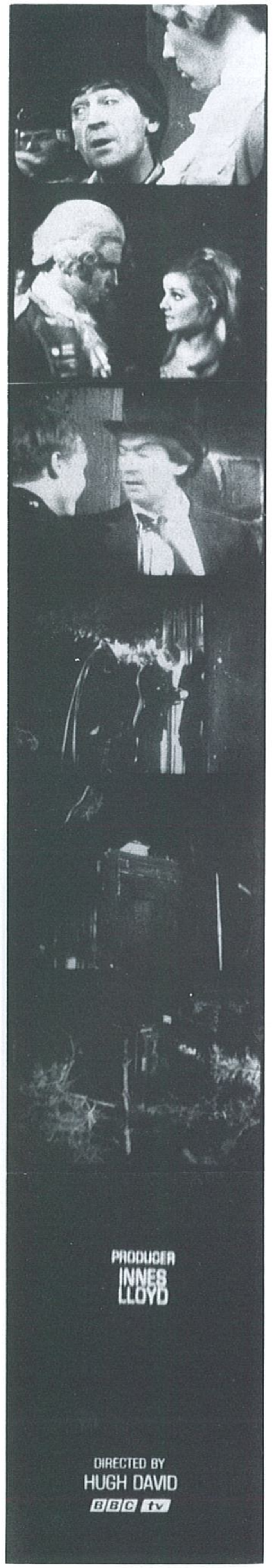
The Doctor walks over to the new captain:
We must go ashore now.
MACKAY: What do you mean?
He turns back to the crew:
Stand by the halyards.
The Doctor joins the laird and Kirsty who have Grey and Perkins at knife-point.
LAIRD: What will we do with the prisoners?
DOCTOR: I think we'll take solicitor Grey ashore as a hostage.
LAIRD: And the clerk?
PERKINS: Laird, may I converse with you? Don't send me ashore with that man.
He points at Grey:
If you're going to France, maybe you could do with a secretary, especially one familiar with the French tongue.
LAIRD: Shifting with the wind you rogue. Well Doctor, what do you say?
DOCTOR: Can any of your people speak French?
LAIRD: But little.
DOCTOR: Then take him with you. He'll stay loyal enough.
PERKINS: I will, I will sir.
DOCTOR: Until the winds shift again. Laird, we must go.
He points to Grey:
Now bring the prisoner over.
Grey stops before his secretary:
Well Perkins?
Perkins snaps his fingers in front of his former boss's face:
I've been wanting to do that for a long time. You've no idea the pleasure that gave me.
Grey attempts to raise his arm to strike Perkins but his guard hauls him away.

The Doctor, Polly, Ben and Grey are enveloped in thick fog, their small boat surrounded by the swirling vapours rising off the sea.
POLLY: I can't even see the ship.
BEN: They said they'd send us a signal before they went.
A small point of lights blinks at them in the distance.
BEN: Hey look, there it is.
POLLY: Do you think they'll beat the English blockade?
DOCTOR: The fog will help them. More than it will help us.
POLLY: We never even said goodbye to Jamie.
BEN: He just disappeared. I wonder where he went to.
An old tarpaulin at the bow of the boat is flung back.
JAMIE: Right here!
BEN: Jamie! Why didn't you go with the others?
JAMIE: I fancied my chances here better. Besides, you'll need someone to guide you through the glens won't ye?
DOCTOR: Glad to have you with us, Jamie.
POLLY: Won't you be in danger here, though?
JAMIE: If you can survive here, then so can I.
The boat reaches the harbour wall steps and its occupants climb ashore. An English patrol can be seen through the mist at the end of the harbour.
BEN: Hey, watch it! Through this door.
Dragging Grey behind them, they slip into an old warehouse. Polly peers through the door:
They're going away. It's alright.

They're going away. It's alright.
Grey momentarily breaks Ben's gagging grip:
Guards!
Jamie puts his knife to his throat:
One more word and you're dead!
POLLY: What if they find us?
Ben and Jamie position themselves either side of the door as it slowly opens. Before the two soldiers are inside Ben and Jamie drop on them and they fall unconscious to the floor. Amid the distraction Grey slips his bonds and dives for a window. Before Polly can shout out he is gone, and Ben starts after him with a soldier's musket.
DOCTOR: No Ben, it's too late.
BEN: He was our hostage. We'll never make it to the TARDIS now.
DOCTOR: We'll find someone else, eh Polly...

Ffinch is standing outside his barracks, lazily searching his pockets for a match to light some tobacco. He looks up aghast:
What the...
BEN:We want your company mate.
POLLY: You won't refuse us, Algy dear?
FFINCH: This is really too much.
POLLY: Quickly, this way.
She grabs his arm and is about to lead him off when Colonel Attwood steps from the barracks:
Where the devil do you think you're going? Have you forgotten it's your deal, Ffinch?
FFINCH: Yes sir, I was just...
ATTWOOD: Who are these vagabonds?
The Doctor steps forward, bowing:
Doctor von Verner at your service. Remedies for the ague, the twitch, the colic, the warts and the gout.
ATTWOOD:I haven't got the gout.
DOCTOR: No, I wouldn't waste your time with that, a fine healthy gentleman like you. No, it's this ring.
He produces the Prince's ring.
FFINCH: I think we'd better get back to the game. The night air you know, and all that.
ATTWOOD: Blast the night air. Let me see.
He gasps in astonishment:
The Pretender's ring! Where did you get this?
DOCTOR: Well...
He starts to wave his arms about:
You go up there, round to your left, then to your right...
ATTWOOD: What are you talking about?
DOCTOR: We were taking the liuetenant you see, sir.
FFINCH: The game?
ATTWOOD: Confound the game. This is the Prince's ring. Go with them and take a detachment.
DOCTOR: Oh no sir!
ATTWOOD: What!
DOCTOR: It might frighten the rascal. We are enough to apprehend him.
ATTWOOD: Well, go on Ffinch, you have your orders.
FFINCH: But this wench...
He catches Attwood's glare:
Yes sir, very good sir.
DOCTOR: And when we have him, we'll bring him back to you, sir.

The group have reached the top of a hill looking down on a cottage.
JAMIE: You see where we are?



BEN: Yeah, I won't forget this place in a hurry.
DOCTOR: Well, it's time we said goodbye Lieutenant. Thank you.
POLLY: I've been telling Algy about Mr. Grey's activities.
BEN: You should nab him quick.
Polly hands Ffinch his lock of hair:
Thank you very much.
FFINCH: It was nothing.
Suddenly Grey and a small contingent of soldiers appear from behind the cottage:
Ah! So you've found these rebels Lieutenant. Well done. You can escort them with me to Inverness. You will not escape the gallows this time Doctor. As for you wench, I'll have you tied to a cart and whipped from one end...
FFINCH: Silence!
GREY: What was that you said?
FFINCH: I've heard the whole story of your scheme from this young lady here.
GREY: You take the word of a rebel?
DOCTOR: Wicked times we live in, a prison commissioner using his office to smuggle rebels out of the country.
GREY: You're wasting your breath Doctor. It was all perfectly legal. The rebels signed the contracts for transportation of their own free will.
DOCTOR: Contracts? I don't believe we saw any contracts. Did you Ben?
BEN: No, I wouldn't know what they were.
GREY: A lie Lieutenant. The contracts were signed and I have them right here.
He searches his pockets:
I know they were...
DOCTOR: Sad. Once a promising legal talent.
FFINCH: There's only one end for slave traders solicitor. Gag him and take him to prison under escort.
GREY: This is all a trick you fool!
Grey is bundled away by the soldiers, kicking and screaming.
POLLY: Algy, why did you do it?
FFINCH: A chance to put paid to a villain, ma'am.
POLLY:It wasn't just that was it?
FFINCH: Not quite ma'am.
POLLY: Thank you Algy.
She pecks Ffinch on the cheek and he blushes slightly, hesitates for a moment and marches off:
Goodbye.
JAMIE: One thing I don't understand, where the contracts went?
DOCTOR: I've no idea...
He looks into his pocket:
How did they get there?
BEN: You old fraud! Come on, we must go.
POLLY: What about Jamie? We can't leave him here.
DOCTOR: True, the ship's sailed.
JAMIE: I'll be alright. They won't catch me.
POLLY: Can't he come with us?
DOCTOR: If you teach me the bagpipes?
JAMIE: If you want.
BEN: That's all we need!
JAMIE: But where are we going?
POLLY: You'll see.
She leads the way to a clearing containing the TARDIS and Ben unlocks the door. He hesitates for a moment and steps inside...
THE END

Michael Elwyn's acting career has included a major character in Doctor Who and also in all three seasons of Doomwatch. His other television work has included The Brothers, The Regiment, Colditz and Triangle. DWB was recently lucky enough to track him down between jobs at his home in south London. He had clear recollections of his portrayal of Lt Algernon Ffinch in *The Highlanders* and Duncan, the minister's PPS, in Doomwatch, and he very kindly gave over some time to talk about these roles.

How much do you recall of the location work for The Highlanders?

We filmed the location work first, as you always did back then. All the battle scenes and the sequences in the wood at night when I fell into the pit.

Were the pit sequences shot on location?

No, the interiors of the pit were done in the studio, but the falling into it and the stumbling through the trees with a lantern were location.

At one point during the first episode you were on a horse.

I remember sitting on it facing a cottage. I asked the person who provided the horse if it would stay still when I fired my pistol. “Oh yes, it's been in westerns in Spain, it's very well trained.” I fired the pistol and it was off, charging all over Frensham Ponds!

That was just before your troops storm the cottage.

Yes, we fought the battle of Culloden. Me with about six troops and Peter Welch as the Sergeant against Bill Dysart, Fraser Hines, Donald Bisset and Hannah Gordon. I went out with Hannah Gordon after that for about a year, off and on, and I still see Dallas Cavell who played the mad pirate. He's still giving that sort of performance, in real life as well as in work!

Do you have any memories of other members of the cast?

Anneke Wills, Fraser Hines who joined in that story, and of course the lovely Pat Troughton. There was also Guy Middleton who was an old matinee idol from the 30s. He'd been in the original production of Terrence Ratigan's “French Without Tears” and he played my senior officer in the last episode. I remember during rehearsals commenting on how slim he was for his age. He said “I've got no stomach, there's nothing there. I've got a sort of by-pass.” He opened his shirt and there was this extraordinary collection of scars and gaps where he'd had a whole chunk removed by an operation. He buttoned up his shirt and we went on rehearsing. A bizarre moment!

What do you recall of the studio work for the story?

PHOTO (C) ALEXANDRA TYNAN

We were at Riverside, which is now the Riverside Centre with the cinema and workshops. I remember the pub across the road which we used to leap into afterwards. The filmed inserts for the boat and the tank were Ealing, and it was Frensham for Scotland. The BBC used Frensham for everything; France, India ...!

From the photographs, it looks like someone is standing off camera blowing smoke across for the battle.

They were, but I don't remember how sophisticated it all was.

A few years on from Highlanders, you became a semi-regular in Doomwatch as Duncan, the minister's Personal Private Secretary.

Yes, I always seemed to be at a desk with a phone — although I got to act my guts out when I contracted a disease carried by spiders (*The Web of Fear*). I remember filming the opening scene in the sauna for that episode. It's a very strange scene! Me perched there with a note pad and a hairy chest!

Do civil servants really pursue their ministers into the sauna?

Very odd! The guy who collapsed on the sauna floor with the mystery disease was Desmond Jones. He was in Dad's Army, always standing in the second row behind the main characters.

How much did you get to develop the character of Duncan over his episodes.

As the character appeared more and more I got quite frustrated because I felt that he could have been more interesting. He was just a link with the minister and Whitehall. He wasn't really allowed to be the kind of character actors fall in love with. You didn't see him away from his desk or the minister — he had no wife or family life. But I was young and it was a lovely job. However, the writers did get something of a feel for Duncan. You can see the difference between *Red Sky* and *Invasion* where they've expanded the character and given him more authority.

The series was a phenomenal success.

Yes, and I think Doomwatch was so successful because it seemed real. The subjects it tackled could happen and very often they did, sometimes just days before or after an episode was transmitted. The coincidences were amazing. I also loved the Max Harris music.

Looking at it now, aside from the clothes, it hasn't really dated.

Yes, I think it was ahead of its time. I think there should be a series of it now because people have become so much more aware.

Michael Elwyn, thank you very much.

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED AND TRANSCRIBED BY ANTHONY CLARK.

"NOW JNT'S TRYING TO WRECK 'WHO'S HISTORY!"

John Hudson, Tyne & Wear (17-6-91)
NOT ONLY has John Nathan-Turner succeeded in killing off 'Doctor Who', he now seems to be trying to wreck its history! For the BBC to put him in charge of video selections after what has happened to the show is tantamount to putting Myra Hindley in charge of a children's home!

I enjoyed DWB#90, but have to disagree with your favourable review of **The Hartnell Years** video. It seems to me an almost total disaster. I bought it on the strength of seeing the original pilot episode and, quite honestly, it's the only thing on the tape worth watching. **The Wheel of Fortune** is well done but hardly inspiring, and **The Final Test** is simply boring: as in **Fortune** William Hartnell is hardly seen, and the script is tedious. Even some of the clips are daft choices: why show **Edge of Destruction** in Arabic when the English version is available? I was dying to know what the Doctor was saying, but - to quote Jon Pertwee - I've gone and lost me Arabic 'ead!

The choice of episodes from **The Crusade** and **The Celestial Toymaker** seems commercially suicidal. Why no monsters? Hardened fans, as well as casual buyers, would surely be much more attracted by surviving episodes from **The Daleks' Master Plan** and **The Tenth Planet**. In view of the fact that **An Unearthly Child** has already been released, why not put these on a single tape with the complete **Edge of Destruction** and give buyers a decent running time for a change?

JNT's presentation has sunk to a new low: he allows Keff McCulloch to reduce the theme tune to supermarket muzak, and lets Sylvester McCoy get away with presentation which is not even competent. Mannerisms like his swagger, finger-pointing and sniff seem calculated to irritate, and throughout his reading of the script he manages to put stresses on the wrong words - a fault even an amateur actor should be able to avoid. I quote: "Many of the trilogic games involved. The use of a double for the Doctor's hands in order to lighten William Hartnell's workload in. The Final Test." If you think this is exaggeration, listen to it again - the cadences of his voice manage to reduce an already tacky script to nonsense.

Existing episodes of the Hartnell and Troughton years have enough material for both Dalek and Cybermen specials, but it seems highly likely that BBC Enterprises are going to wreck their market by releasing such tatty efforts, and then these will never see the light of day. I have already boycotted the £20 tapes, and I won't be buying **The Troughton Years** because of the poor choice of episodes. Surely there is some past **Doctor Who** producer or script editor who can rescue us from JNT's complacency? Come back Graham Williams! Philip Hinchcliffe! **Anybody!!**

Michael Healy, Merseyside (5-6-91)
I have just purchased the two era tapes and here are my thoughts. The box design is simplistic, but is it effective? They certainly stand out from the other **Doctor Who** tapes, but do they stand out on the shelf? I would have preferred an artistic montage incorporating the featured episodes. The opening titles are fine, but the music is **terrible!** When I heard it I wanted to throw up! It sounds like something from Daytime TV!

Sylvester McCoy is very good as presenter on the Hartnell tape, but the written material is very brief and Hartnell's biography sparse; no mention of his long film career, his rôle in **The Army Game** or how he got the part of the Doctor. The so-called Pilot episode should never have been included. Fluffed lines, bad acting, camera shadows and more, all confirming director Waris Hussein's words that the show was unbroadcastable, even in 1963. Surely Sylvester was being sarcastic when he described it as a **classic** piece of television! The acting and the script for **The Crusade 3** were very good, although a fuller and more detailed synopsis of the story should have been provided by McCoy. **The Celestial Toymaker** was a fine story, but the final episode does not add up to much on its own and no story synopsis at all is given.

That's yer lot! No more episodes, even though there is room for at least two more. Sigh discontentedly, rewind tape and insert The Troughton Years. Again we are aurally raped by Keff McCulloch's sickening theme. Jon Pertwee seems ill at ease looking into camera. While his memories of his friend 'Pat' Troughton are genuinely sincere, his presentation style gives the impression of having to rush to an urgent appointment as soon as he's finished! The highlight was **The Abominable Snowmen** episode, but then I hadn't seen it on BSB. **The Enemy of the World** was an odd episode of **Doctor Who,** odder still because of the fact that there are no story synopses at all provided on this tape, so unless you're already familiar with the plot you can't have a clue as to what is going on. The episode was yawn inducing, actionless, tepidly directed and with mediocre acting and scripting. Worse was to come with **The Space Pirates,** probably the dreariest piece of TV I have seen. The sets were abysmal, resembling a Redifusion showroon, and the whole thing was a send-up with the space crew speaking in fake transatlantic accents. For a moment I thought I was watching a late night C4 spoof '50s movie like Plan Nine From Outer Space. Who wants to watch a Ronnie Barker look-alike trying to eat a boiled egg for five minutes when we could have been treated to **Web of Fear** 1 or **The Evil of the Daleks** 2?

With a little more thought and consideration these tapes could have been winners, instead they are miserable flops in my opinion. I would like to see more imagination if this sort of thing is repeated. For example, only two episodes are missing from **Reign of Terror,** so why not have Ian and Barbara reminiscing about the missing episodes in their old age? The same could be done with **The Tenth Planet** (one missing episode), **The Ice Warriors** (two) and **The Invasion** (two). If more individual episode tapes are released, then more story details should be given so as not to confuse casual buyers as to what's going on.

Daniel Portillo, Cardiff (26-6-91)
Congratulations for producing what must be the most consistently high-quality fanzine around; the speed and detail with which you feature news is astonishing.

I'm very glad that DWB does not hold John Nathan-Turner in the same esteem as BBC Video or DWM and has him writing articles! I honestly don't know why BBC Video want the man working with him on **Who** projects. How doesn't really know much about it - he once rambled on about Bessie, persistently referring to her as "Betsy"! Every **other** producer treated the post as a job and then left the series to proceed on to another job, but JNT just won't let go of the series. I'd rather have a long-term and respected fan like Jeremy Bentham having his current involvement as an "adviser" for the series.

The provisional list of 1992 video releases came as no real surprise, with six of the twelve releases being JNT's own stories. Why can't the man simply move on to something else? He's also outstayed his welcome on the convention circuit, and the fact that they are one of his only sources of income means that his perpetual involvement with the series labels him as the definitive sad-man!

I was also disappointed to learn of Alister Pearson's re-election to BBC Video cover artist. I bet his re-appointment has done his ego the power of good. What he actually draws is good, but his designs are so boring, they're usually just empty. I'll admit that Andrew Skilleter's likeness of Tom Baker on **The City of Death** cover was uninspiring, but both his covers were far more exciting and colourful than any of Alister Pearson's. BBC Enterprises seems to love employing egocentrics!

The Prisoner, No.6, The Village (6-6-91)
I hear that some of your competitors are into poetry. Get even with them, print this:

Doctor Who is off our screens,
You know that is the truth,
Who's to blame? I hear you cry,
JNT, now here's the proof:

He got the job in '79,
Ten million viewers a week,
He left with only five, good grief,
And that was at its peak!

For half the year we'd watch our Doc,
On Saturday nights, how nice,
It's Wednesdays of late, for 14 weeks,
And the show's been cancelled **twice!**

Quality Doctors were the order of the day,
Like Pertwee and Tom Baker,
The 80s was just downright bad,
That's right - McCoy and Colin Baker!

Last year we thought he'd gone, at last,
But back he comes once more,
He's chosen crap for the era tapes,
I can't stand it anymore!

Some people think he's done great good,
Doctor Who, they say, he's mastered,
But most fail to agree with them,
For they think...

ED: The last line is censored on the grounds of taste. Please note that in future only correspondence with a full name and address attached will see print.

TIMEWYRM: MIXED VIEWS

David Houlgate, N.Yorkshire (25-6-91)
It seemed, from recent opinions expressed in DWB, that the Timewyrm series was doomed even before it started. Having read Genesys I couldn't disagree more. I couldn't understand how someone could be so pessimistic about something that didn't even exist.

The plot is uncomplicated and straightforward, something the TV programme would do well to remember should it return. It's also noticeably different from that reviewed by Anthony Clark in DWB#88. Some changes are subtle, but do make all the difference. There are numerous references (possibly too many) to the Doctor's past adventures. Whilst the guest appearance of the 4th Doctor works well into the plot, that of the 3rd Doctor's personality in the 7th Doctor's body does not and isn't really necessary. Ace remembering Paradise Towers is obviously an error, but these are just minor faults.

All the main characters have backgrounds and are given descriptions and purpose, not just words on paper like so many of the book's predecessors. Indeed Timewyrm: Genesys does create a gulf between itself and previous **Doctor Who** novels. The book is definitely for older readers; sex, violence, horror and earthly language make it so. It must be made clear by Virgin to the booksellers of the contents of the new books so that they are not placed alongside existing titles (so often in the children's section).

True, the story isn't entirely original and, like Anthony Clark's review noted, it reminded me of **The Myth Makers** in its style, but so what. Many of the so-called classic Tom Baker Gothic stories were "borrowed" from elsewhere.

Genesys has been a good start to the series; if Terrance Dicks can improve on it with his instalment, Exodus, all the better, though he'll have to improve on what he's done before.

Matthew Smith, E.Sussex (15-6-91)
With no new television Doctor Who likely to appear, what of its future in novel form? Having just finished reading Timewyrm: Genesys, I have to say that it far exceeded my expectations - it was much **worse** than I had thought it would be! If Peter Darvill-Evans and John Peel think that detailed descriptions of sex with under-age girls, thirteen year old prostitute's bare breasts and Ace's underwear make the book "adult", then they are sadly mistaken. All this merely serves to provide adolescent fans with masturbatory material. This aside, the story was a dull runaround which suffered from poor dialogue and appalling characterisation of the Doctor and Ace. The best thing about the novel is the cover - I have never been a great fan of Andrew Skilleter's work but I feel that his recent covers for the New Adventures and the **Star Cops** videos have been very good, and your implied criticism of him in DWB#91 was both unfair and unfounded based, as it must have been, on a handful of opinions at best.

LIMIT 'WHO's BUDGET!

Edward Parsons, West Midlands (8-6-91)
I entirely agree with Alan Beadnell's views in DWB#90. It seems to me that Doctor Who works best when adhering to a tight budget. With no money to throw around, producers, directors etc. have to really be at their best and most inventive. Just look what Verity Lambert and Innes Lloyd did with £2000 and 20 square feets of studio! JNT was probably the first producer to have access to relatively large amounts of money (too much in my view). Whilst the money for peripherals and location filming increased, story content decreased proportionally. It is often said that JNT has given the programme a new "polished" look, but scrape away that polish and you'll find no substance, something that the programme always used to have. It's like comparing a cheap ten-year-old polished table and a battered antique Chippendale. My advice to the BBC (or independent production company) for future **Doctor Who** would be to have a limited budget and twice as many episodes but, most importantly, appoint an **experienced** producer who has a proven track record and who can raise the series to its full potential.

'WHO NEEDS A SAVIOUR

Phil Harrison, Cheshire (20-6-91)
One of the main weaknesses of Doctor Who, and one which I feel has contributed to its decline in quality and lack of respect from the BBC, is that the programme has never had a Gene Roddenberry-type character that has been present from the start; someone on the same professional level as the BBC who could champion the series and be taken seriously. We haven't even come close to it, even with Sydney Newman: "I'm prouder of that sculpture (sic) than I am of Doctor Who" (DWB#41/42). Therefore it is good to hear Verity Lambert speak for **Doctor Who,** although people like her and other immensely talented people like Bob Holmes and Philip Hinchcliffe chose to stay out of the limelight, too modest to take the credit for their endeavours.

No one seems to want the job full time, save for that pretender to the throne JNT, who only stays on as an adviser/merchandise expert because he's typecast, and did all the conventions in the States because he fancied a job in Hollywood - a case of self-promotion taking precedence over promotion of a quality production!

Doctor Who needs someone independent of influence and coersion by the BBC; **Star Trek** fans can indeed count themselves lucky to have had Mr. Roddenberry present when the series' revival was being seriously considered. So, as it has always been, the fans continue to provide the sole, all too seldom heard voice for **Doctor Who,** and until an independent body has been formed to take their place alongside DWAS and its questionable policies, we will never be taken seriously. Any takers?

DWAS DOESN'T DESERVE 'OFFICIAL' TAG

John Connors, Liverpool (8-6-91)
The DWAS's decline seems to be obvious to everyone except the current DWAS executive who waffle on as if things were okay. I can't understand why they are having so much trouble making things work; with a team of seven or eight people I could run the DWAS and put it back on its feet in six months, and I'm sure many other people could as well - it's not that difficult! The likes of John Collins and Steve Wickham seem unable to grasp the first thing about what it is they have inherited and are letting down the Society's rich heritage. Since late 1988, the DWAS has not deserved its "official" status, and I don't think it'll keep it much longer once the full extent of its maladministration and decay is uncovered.

As for Craig Hinton - he is as much to blame as anyone. He had a chance to rescue DWAS from the mire, but he chose to kow tow to the likes of Andrew Beech and company rather than listen to the people whose views really matter: the DWAS members.

Regarding the film, don't write it off yet. It's not uncommon for projects like this to be in development for ten years before finally reaching the cinemas, so there's still a good chance that a new deal will be set up for the Doctor's big-screen life yet.

ED: John was a long-serving DWAS exec. member liasing with the Local Groups Network until fairly recently.

Incidentally Craig Hinton has requested more time to prepare his memoirs of his time as DWAS Co-ordinator, and these will now be appearing next issue...

ANOTHER MIXED BAG

Bryan Jenner, Calgary, Canada (25-6-91)
I would like to take this opportunity to evaluate the final seven episodes of STTNG's fourth season.

Q-Pid was TNG's chance to join the Robin Hood bandwagon, but sadly it was an embarrassing failure. As a comedy it was not funny, in terms of acting it was mixed. Q has become a shadow of his former self and now simply exists as a chance for cheap laughs or a handy plot device. If you need to bring someone back, or to explore the bizarre, just write in Q, no matter if he deserves to be there or not. If some thought JNT's **Doctor Who** was pantomime, what will they make of this?

The Drumhead proved to me beyond a doubt that Jonathan Frakes is among the best directors the show employs. Combined with his excellent acting, Frakes has become the show's single most important person. The story was a 24th century witch hunt and was as subtle as a sledge hammer. It matched any previous episode for preaching, but was still interesting. A question is raised, though: why are all French characters portrayed by English artistes?

Half A Life saw the return of Lwaxana Troi in a surprisingly fresh vehicle for her. The story took two distinct phases. The first 20 minutes gave Majel Barrett a chance to act silly and annoy, while the latter half of the story improved exponentially. Some absolutely brilliant, emotional and touching acting by both Barrett and guest star David Ogden Stiers as Timicin followed the latter's disturbing revelation... It was sensational, and reinforced just how awful seasons one and two were in terms of acting and impact.

The Host was ridiculous. All through it I thought of those tabloid headlines telling us about men giving birth. Realising Gates McFadden was herself pregnant, I analysed how the director hid this fact from view: shoot Crusher chest-up, or have her in long shot hidden behind something. Keep this in mind when viewing. The episode itself was a weak and dreary affair based on familiar Trek themes. Everyone bar Jonathan Frakes seemed particularly tired and wooden in this one, as if we were paying the price for the excellence of earlier stories. The final five minutes were also the most stupid and absurd five minutes ever transmistted on television. Garbage.

The Mind's Eye. The Enterprise meets James Bond and Alfred Hitchcock! This episode certainly made up for the embarrassment of the previous story. I was astonished that the direction was so superb. Fish-eye lenses, weird point-of-view shots and some bizarre angles, all done to give a sense of Hitchcock-like suspense and made this an intrigue-filled and tension-laden gem. Pay particular attention to the unseen Romulan commander; her voice may be familiar...

In Theory was a return to the season one style of two separate and generally unrelated subplots: one featuring Data in a romantic relationship, the other about a region of space that affects the Enterprises' computers. Oddly enough, Data's romance was not explained as one of these afflictions. Brent Spiner appeared to enjoy his rather active rôle and Patrick Stewart's directorial debut was competent although hardly distinguishing. A pleasant but average episode.

Redemption, Part 1 was a bewildering and brilliant episode that looks like it could spawn two more parts. All of Duras' family - from his sisters and son to Aunt Maude - are all hungry for revenge. This story dealt mostly with the Klingons as only Worf and Picard have any element in it. As for those certain rumours, well...

DIFFERENCE OF OPINION

Stuart Smith, Tyne and Wear (25-6-91)
I was very surprised to read Julian Knott's critical review of two **Blake's 7** episodes I have always regarded highly; **Horizon** and **Pressure Point,** in DWB#91.

I accept that, in common with all Allan Prior's **Blake's 7** scripts, **Horizon** contains a fair degree of waffle, but on the whole the two episodes are enjoyable viewing.

If Julian doesn't like these two, what will he say about episodes that really **are** bad, like **Volcano** or **The Harvest of Kairos?**

REQUEST TIME

Steven Bull, Bristol (25-6-91)
I must congratulate you on your recent issues. The interviews and **The Highlanders** photos have been first rate, as have been the majority of the articles. The only complaint that I do have, however, is in the level of detail in the **STTNG** synopses. While I do like to read about future episodes, I feel that the current level of detail is too great. I would much prefer future story outlines to be along the same lines of detail as those you did for Seasons 2 and 3.

It was interesting to read about the location filming of **The Evil of the Daleks** in DWB#91 - particularly as I had believed the sequences to have been shot at Knebworth House. On reflection, however, if a photo of Knebworth House (from Proteus issue 1, page 5) is compared to Sandra Reid's photos, then it is very clear to see that this was not the location used. Even official BBC photos taken at the time (DWM#87, page 16) prove that it was not Knebworth House.

Tony Fitzpatrick, Dublin 5 (15-6-91)
I am writing to you under your subtitle "The British Journal of Telefantasy". I'm not a fan of **Who** or **Trek** but I really enjoy DWB's fine news section, video news etc. Being a huge fan of **Robin of Sherwood** I've enjoyed your video news on the series, but what has happened to DWB's fine articles on the tapes? Also when will we see a full article on **Robin of Sherwood,** surely one of the finest British telefantasy series ever made?

ED: It is our endeavour to cover the broad spectrum of telefantasy in an as complete and detailed manner possible. In the case of our STTNG episode guides, these are concise synopses of episodes recently shown in America but will not be aired in Britain for some time. They are there as a service for those curious to know what the episodes involve, and far from acting as a spoiler they often serve to whet the appetite. If you don't wish to know what happens, then simply don't read them!

We are aware of the drying up of our Robin of Sherwood coverage, due to the fact that our Robin expert John H.Elson has had pressing professional commitments of late. We will try to make up for this imbalance in the near future.

Both the above points will be considered when we compile this year's readers' poll...

...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

latest developments. The reviews that followed transmission have in the main been balanced, hopefully constructive and, I might add, have never been censored by JNT as has been alleged. We leave rabid hatred of one person to those better qualified to exercise that rôle.

I have absolutely no wish to dispute your right to comment on DWM or the series. I welcome the opportunity your article gave to take stock of what we were doing, check some of your accusations and respond, I hope as gracefully as possible, to those accusations given the circumstances. However, I do feel very strongly that DWB has better things to do with its pages than examine DWM page by page for perceived bias, and I'm sure our readers are well qualified to judge the truth of that allegation for themselves.

The continuing attacks on JNT strike me as counter-productive when not matched with suggestions for how the show should be run, and some eighteen months after the fact, isn't it a little late to throw the blame for something you don't like in his direction? I would have thought the most important issue of the day as far as Doctor Who is concerned is to get it back on air, featuring strong, intelligent stories that do not rely on special effects or contrived fisticuffs to carry them, prevalent in other SFTV series. Every fan has their own idea of what exactly constitutes such a story. To go to the lengths of personal attack when one person's idea of what the programme/magazine is about does not conclude with their own is not the mark of a fan, it's sadly a sign of the word fan is derived from - fanatic. And the world has enough of those.

John Freeman, (Still) Editor, DWM

DWB EDITOR: While it is not my wish to enter into such a heated debate, John's last two paragraphs have nevertheless prompted me to comment. While, John, you may feel that there are better things for DWB to fill its pages with, that is clearly for me to decide. I can assure you that after eight years of editing DWB I am more than qualified to judge this for myself, and the idea for such a series - providing ordinary fans with a platform to air their views to people like yourself, who produce material on which they spend a proportion of their income or, in some cases, all *their pocket money - is long overdue. As a commercial operation you should particularly be aware of the need to be accountable to your customers. By the way, Duncan and Michael's articles were sent voluntarily, not solicited, since they feel so strongly on the subject.*

I won't comment on the issues raised, but I will contend that it is the editor's rôle to prepare an article for publication, which may involve minor amendments concerning phrasing or editing out of certain sentences to bring it up to scratch. What is clearly not *acceptable is where the author's views are distorted in any way or the emphasis of his/her article is changed to suit the publisher.*

As for "the continuing attacks on JNT", obviously you could never afford to be objective on the subject, particularly while Marvel continues to employ him as "adviser" (surely now a redundant rôle since what is there for him to advise on that you yourself do not know about?). While he continues to involve himself with the series he will continue to be a target. There are many who will never forgive him for what they perceive as the irreversible damage he has done to the show, and there are also many people who worked on the show, some long before he became producer, who he has upset. People don't forget that easily, and the fact that he has apparently pigeon-holed himself as "custodian" of the series is a cross he must bear, like it or not. Margaret Thatcher, the politician with whom his own eleven year tenureship can most closely be mirrored, had the good sense last month to finally call it a day. There will be many relieved when JNT finally follows suit...

By the way, John, series relying on "special effects and contrived fisticuffs"? I don't know which SF series you refer to, but in my book this sums up perfectly '80s Doctor Who! And you really should be a little less wild with your accusations - to the best of my knowledge JNT has never *been attacked on a personal level; on his capabilities in his professional field, yes, but his personal life has never come under critical scrutiny, certainly not in DWB!*

Doctor Who : *Adventures through time and space*

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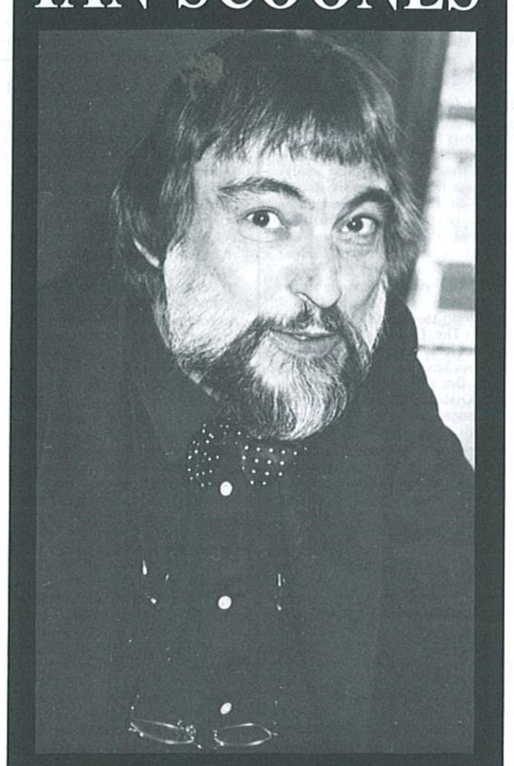


CONTINUING OUR SERIES OF INTERVIEWS WITH SOME OF THE LEADING LIGHTS OF TELEFANTASY DESIGN, THIS ISSUE WE PRESENT THE FIRST PART OF A FASCINATING INTERVIEW WITH ONE OF THE MOST PROLIFIC AND TALENTED VISUAL EFFECTS SUPREMOS, IAN SCOONES, CONDUCTED IN GILLINGHAM IN KENT ON APRIL 3rd BY JEREMY AND PAULA BENTHAM AND GARY LEIGH...

IAN, how did you first get involved in the field of visual effects design?
I'd left art college knowing what I wanted to do because I had a very good display tutor who encouraged me to attend theatre groups. We had at that time four theatre groups in the Chatham area and they would take students on to help them to understand what theatre was all about; timing with actors, what a stage production actually entailed, the lighting, the scenery etc. Basically I discovered that television and film is only theatre with cameras and extra lights, the only difference being that with theatre it's always a different performance and a different audience.

I started with Bowie Films in 1960, and most of Les Bowie's work at that time was for Hammer Films, which was the studio I wished to get into anyway. Les Bowie was the father of so many of us in the business. He actually **felt** the films, he loved film and he had enthusiasm right up until the day he died, whereas so many other effects people just wanted the money and ran. They didn't love cinematography and all its different tones whereas Les did - he was like a little boy with a lot of play things, a very professional little boy.

He came out of the army after being a POW in Italy where he'd amazed other prisoners by mocking up uniforms, badges, keys, anything to upset his Italian captors. Then he was taken to Germany and released in 1946, and by that time he had met many people in the film industry who had said 'There is only one job for you, Les, if you don't want to stay in the army, and that is to come to the Pinewood Effects Department', which is what he did. He started as a matte artist, painting glass and marrying it up to sets, which basically means you don't have to wait in this country to film a beautiful sunset - you paint it all on glass and just marry it to the film itself.

Les stayed at Pinewood for many years under the direction of Bill Warrington, who had also been involved in wartime manoeuvres disguising dockyard towns by putting lots of studio lamps about two miles away and cut-outs of ships, inflatable tankers and so on, so the Germans would hopefully drop their bombs on the mock-ups and not the actual towns themselves, and of course they'd also deceive us in the same way. Anyway, these two gentlemen got on very well together and Les learnt all the techniques of special effects very easily as he was a natural inventor. He then decided to go freelance, as did everybody in the mid-fifties, and one of his first contracts was to do all the matte glasses for the early Hammer films that were then becoming successful. Up till then the company was called "Exclusive Films", and although the word Hammer had been around for a number of years they hadn't actually released any pictures under that banner.

Then somebody had the idea - I think it was Tony Hinds who had watched **Quatermass** on BBCtv at the time - to get into science fiction, which Hammer hadn't done before, and so the film version of **Quatermass** was one of Les's first films where he was "Les Bowie Effects" in his own right, with his partner Victor Maguity. It was a great success.

Anyway, I met him in 1960 after writing seventy-five letters to different film companies not realising that people were no longer in-house - by the time you'd see a name on a screen in your local cinema they'd all flown! - and so I never had one reply! Then I was lucky to meet dear Peter Cushing down at Whitstable and he introduced me to his art director at Bray Studios, Bernard Robinson, who in turn introduced me to Les Bowie. I started working with Les on The Day The Earth Caught Fire, which wasn't a Hammer film, and then The Curse of Captain Clegg (which was known as Night Creatures in the States). I was his general dogsbody come teaboy for about the next four years but I was learning all the time and aware that I could always be sacked at the end of each picture. There were several of us at that time learning the ropes, including Nicky Alder, Brian Johnson, Neil Swan and Alan Barnard. Harry Oaks was very much a part of Hammer then as the second unit to the cameraman before becoming a fully-fledged special FX camera man. Les would bring him in to light the models and he would do alot of the miniatures, such as shots of châteaux and castles, and then of course Hammer - being very tightfisted - would flip the film over and use it in their next production!

Les's ambition was to have his own film company, and at the time Gerry Anderson was going from strength to strength doing **Four Feather Falls, Fireball XL5, Supercar** etc. and they needed to expand. They had a bigger budget allocated to **Thunderbirds** from Lou Grade so they moved into bigger buildings further up into the industrial estate, and suddenly AP Films was vacant and Les Bowie continued renting it. So we moved in there and we were literally ten minutes drive away from Hammer at Bray.

This gave us scope to learn a lot more and to experiment with effects, and you never stop learning. The time you do stop learning is the time to retire. Everybody feeds off everybody else, and if you find a new technique for doing something, everybody else knows about it overnight. On The Day The Earth Stood Still, instead of making models of everything it was Les's idea to do it with black and white photos which we reproduced prefectly on a black and white screen, albeit that this was a Cinemascope production. People like Derek Meddings and Bob Bell, who were also matte artists, came in to work on it, and my humble job was to 'Copydex' all the photographs, stick them on to hardboard, cut them up and position them on what we called a hot sky. Bob and Derek taught me the techniques and we would paint things on to the photos. In the film the Earth is supposed to be getting hotter and hotter and Les's interpretation of a hot sky was this very hot, tremendous greyness which vibrates, so he wanted every sky done in a sort of grey/green wash which he said would photograph very well. There were shots of Fleet Street and Ludgate Circus where a train was supposed to have crashed and people had rioted so telegraph poles and bus stops had been thrown over cars and they were all smashed up and, rather than doing this as models, all that was painted onto the photographs! I also learnt about floor effects and atmospherics - like the big fog that was taking over London - on that film, but Les wasn't very happy with the fog rolling down the Thames which he thought was a bit Mickey Mouse. It was done using dry ice but it was rushed at the time and we were over our budget and there was no time for reshoots.

After that I went back to Bray and worked on half a dozen Hammer movies. I was always given the 'lovely' jobs because I was the boy. I can remember in The Scarlett Blade there is an arrow or something shot at this carriage as it trundles through Black Park, which is an atmospheric pine forest just at the back of Pinewood, and the coash has to start flaming and smoking, so I'm actually in the carriage letting off one of these little black smoke bombs asphyxiating myself, but it was all great fun!

How were the effects at Hammer planned? Did you all sit around a table to discuss ideas?
We certainly had production meetings, but we were much more interested in the money side rather than how things were done because the producer would want to know how much it was going to cost. Then it would be down to the allocated effects man's conception and brains as to how he was going to do it for that money. No script would be passed by the producer if he thought it would be too expensive, so they were always run-of-the-mill effects.

Were you frustrated by these limitations?
No, I was totally new to the game so I was in awe at everything going on around me. I was almost silent for ten years because I was so afraid to ask a question and be made to feel a total fool!

Every effect must be, in effect, a one-off, so how do your form preconceptions of how, or indeed if, it will come off?
You have to have a lot of faith in a lot of gadgetry and oneself and the big man upstairs and you just hope it's going to go right when you press the button, but you'd always rehearse it beforehand. If you go in totally green or cold it's just not the way to do it, especially if you're dealing with actors. If you've got to shoot somebody it might be a run-of-the-mill shooting, but you must have the relationship with that actor to give him confidence so he knows that he's not going to be shot by some idiot who pretends to know what he's doing. And actors are very highly strung people, they're the ones out in front of the camera, they've got their parts to play and to them it's an unnecessary nuisance to have to have effects done with them.

Were you credited on your film work?
In those early days no, but I did become a second unit director for **Thunderbirds** for six episodes - my first credits at the age of twenty-four in the mid-sixties! **Thunderbirds** came about because Hammer wasn't in production all the time, so Les would 'sack' all his boys when nothing was happening and get back in touch with them when something cropped up. I was with Les off and on between 1960-70 and around the middle of that time Gerry Anderson was going from strength to strength and Les suggested that we go up to his place, which was of course only a mile away, and so we did and got involved with **Thunderbirds** in 1965. Derek Meddings by then was firmly entrenched as effects supervisor and Bob Bell was the art director.

Were there any techniques you discovered working for Les Bowie which applied at AP Films?
Yes, how not to trip over wires and cables and never to touch lamps or lights because the electricians get very touchy about that and there's a very strong union demarcation where those sort of things are concerned!

What was the production turnover like on 'Thunderbirds'?
I think I'm right in saying that one episode would be completed in ten days, and that's including Saturdays and Sundays and usually working late into the evening till about 10.30pm. We literally lived **Thunderbirds** - we never had time to spend the small pittance Gerry paid us!

Did you find it strange adapting to a totally different style of production involving puppets?
Well, in the effects side we didn't actually work with the puppets. Ezra Dearing worked the puppets and he was a sort of mad professor character with a lovely long white beard and flowing white hair - a total buffoon on the floor but he did produce some very good models.

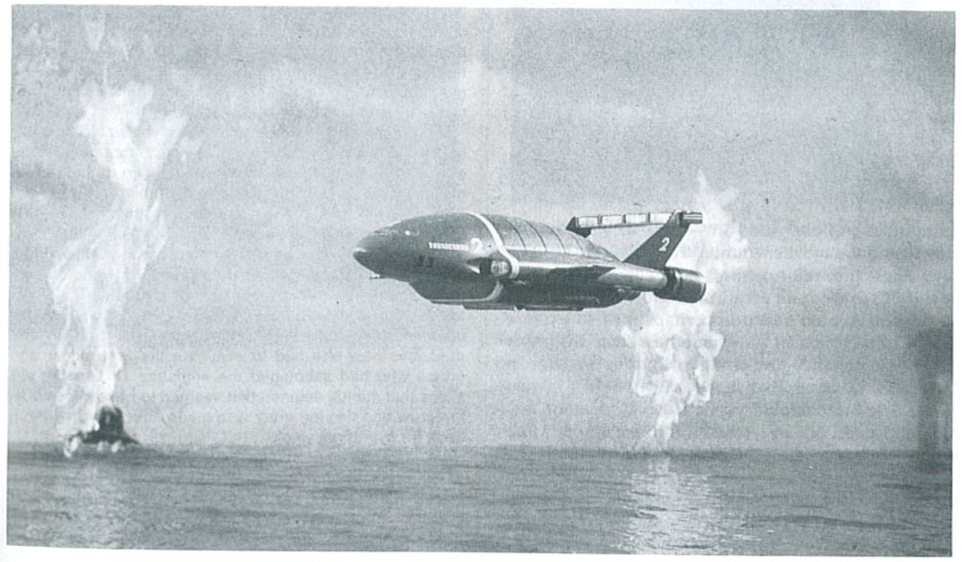
Who actually designed and made the models for the series?
Derek Meddings designed everything and we had a whole group of modelmakers, a lot of whom had worked on 2001.

Why did you work such long hours. Was there ever any union intervention?
Gerry got around this by bringing in what he called "specialists" which weren't available from the rest of the union, so he managed to get round that one.

Were you still learning on 'Thunderbirds', albeit on a smaller scale?
Well, you learned about lenses and camera speeds, but a lot of what was done on **Thunderbirds** was almost first time because nobody had ever shot sequences like that before - it was like doing an entire Hammer film in ten days flat! There were four units altogether, two on the puppet side and two on the special effects. Derek was in charge of one effects unit and on the second unit about four of us were given the chance to take it in turns to direct. My unit included Brian Johnson and Shaun Whitaker-Cook.

Derek would design all the vehicles and we would actually make our own sets. For example, if the script required a mountain road, we would have what we called a library of polystyrene rocks which tended to look like polystyrene, but we learnt techniques like throwing buckets of water over them and then buckets of sand and letting nature do its own natural formation with the use of gravity, so it was very much the sandpit syndrome again - it was back to the little boys playing with mud pies as far as the sets were concerned! We'd paint our own backings which again we learned from Derek who in turn learned that from Bowie; how to use an ultra marine blue graded up at the bottom with a spray gun to give you a horizon, then put in little tufts of cotton wool clouds and you'd do that right around the stage. If we were doing water shots that was always a drama; we had a bloody heavy tank, specially made in two halves, which had to be wheeled in and clamped together with this rubber seal and they would fill it up the night before ready to go in the morning. They'd use it in things like the alligator one, which was one of my favourites. We used real baby alligators - which appeared full size against the models - but the stench of these creatures under the lights, sometimes over 110°, was dreadful. The alligators enjoyed themselves though, and we'd get them to knock down the model of the cottage by coaxing them.

Anderson was so lucky to find Derek Meddings because he was the overall supreme designer and gave the whole feeling to what **Thunderbirds** and **Fireball XL5** were; a continuity of style that goes all the way up to his work on **UFO**. He didn't do **Space 1999**, which had a different visual feel. That was Brian Johnson. Derek had to oversee pretty much everything for continuity. We were very much, in the nicest possible way, "the slaves of Derek". You have to have a supervisor, otherwise things just won't tie up, so he would walk over from his set to check, when we were ready to turn over, if everything matched up with what he'd been doing on his set.



Were there occasions when something didn't work the way it was designed to?
Yes, but with clever editing they usually managed to get round any problems. Where retakes were necessary we would probably have carried on into the evening, but there were very, very few retakes, apart from the biggest bloomer I have ever done in my life, and that taught me a lesson! That was the adventure with the oil rig and Brian Johnson was in charge. This was again in the water tank and Derek had to blow up the whole of the oil rig and we had two or three cameras all whirring away at high speed. One of the ways to do an explosion without doing an explosion was to put bungey rubber on a nylon line to the object which is also, in turn, held in place by another line to a small charge. The small charge goes up, the bungey rubber pulls everything back north, south, east and west, and you get the impression that there is a lot more power from the pyrotechnic charge than there actually is. My job was to cut this one nylon line which held the whole of this set together. It had been pre-cut and all put together like a jigsaw puzzle and had taken all day to set up. For some reason there was a total mix-up of the cueing and each camera was up to speed but one jammed and suddenly I heard Brian's voice saying "cut!", and I was so geared up with my big pair of kitchen scissors and I cut the line! Derek zoomed to all cardinal points of the stage, water everywhere, and there were no cameras turning over, so I was not the flavour of the month!

Did you have to work to a mathematical formula in order to get the scale right?
No, it was all done by eye and again something I learnt from Bowie, and the reason I keep going back to him is because he taught us all the fundamentals. He would say 'You've got the eye for it' and in the end you get used to looking through the camera and you know what the camera is going to tell you. You would use a wider lens on a model to make it look a lot bigger and it would always be a live model to give you a greater depth of field. You'd always use a sloping foreground on the set which would be slightly soft enabling you to feel that you were at the right level. In other words you wouldn't be forty feet high looking down at the eyeline level if it were real, and these things you learn very quickly. You just get to know what the camera sees instinctively.

Did you learn anything from the American effects industry and vice versa?
We like to say that it was the British Film Industry that masterminded so many of these sort of miniature techniques, and some of the British innovators decided to go to the States and they took their techniques from Britain with them and expanded over there in Hollywood. Having said that, basically every technique in the book was used as far back as in Metropolis in the 1920s. In fact three studios in Germany went bankrupt making that movie.

NEXT ISSUE: We venture on to discuss, in depth, Ian's work in his own right on 'Doctor Who' and 'Blake's 7'...

Making It So

CAPTAIN PICARD may be preoccupied with such grand issues as the future of Romulan/Federation relations, but actor Patrick Stewart's attention to creating Picard as a full-bodied character extends to relatively small details. He has been insistent on the importance of keeping reminders of past episodes in the Captain's quarters, such as the Klingon dagger used in *Sins of the Fathers*, seen displayed on a table, and the woven fabric the Mintakan gave the Captain in *Who Watches the Watchers*, which has been draped over the back of Picard's chair. He does not do this just as a gesture to the fans, although he is gratified when convention audiences tell him they have indeed noticed these small touches.

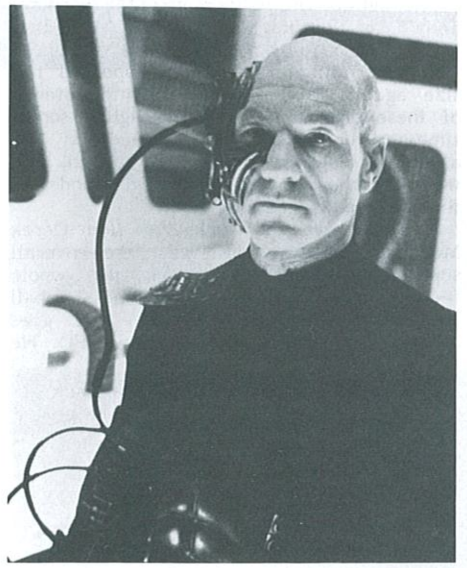
At the studio they say "they'll never know," he explains, "I don't care. For me it's important because it gives a personal touch to Picard's life." For him this is all part of giving effect to "the allowable eccentricities of rank" — a phrase found in the original character description crafted by Gene Roddenberry but not developed nearly enough in the series in Stewart's view. He would also like to see more humour incorporated into the scripts for Picard, although he hastens to add, "it's not that I want Picard to become a stand-up comedian"; rather he thinks jokes a great conduit for personality and he is thinking in terms of developing something more for the august Captain in the areas of irony and understatement.

He is similarly keen on other elements linking episodes together, of introducing something only to come back to it at a later point. That kind of reference to earlier episodes has been particularly important in the fourth season and contributes to Stewart's sense that the whole series should be thought of as a multi-act play (now approaching 100 acts!). While appearing at a convention in New York he was looking forward to filming an episode called *Drumhead* which re-examined Picard's decisions going back to the first season through the hostile eyes of an admiral who is convinced that the Captain has been involved in some sort of conspiracy with the Romulans. He is very clear that after nearly four years on the series the cast are now running these characters themselves — not that this means much direct input into scripts. The actors seldom know much about upcoming stories while they are in development; they have an impact when it comes to making changes as they are about to film the result. Stewart was involved in making small changes to the *Drumhead* script in the way Picard reacts to the admiral's questioning of his conduct in the few days left before filming began.

One area in which he says his influence is vastly overestimated is in the use of Shakespearean lines and allusions in The Next Generation. He insists that he is not responsible for that, although he certainly responds when asked if there is something in Shakespeare which perhaps parallels the point of a scene. On the other hand, he was pleased at the idea of Data acting out Shakespearean plays as a way of trying to understand humanity (introduced in *The Defector*) and is afraid that the impact of that is being dissipated by having him doing other kinds of dramas this season (A Christmas Carol in *Devil's Due* and Cyrano de Bergerac in *The Nth Degree*). It is well known among fans that Picard has an old volume of Shakespeare kept open under glass in his ready room and that Stewart has insisted that every few episodes the pages on that volume should be turned. He was stunned to find that when the ritual was observed recently, the upturned page featured a photo of himself playing Touchstone that he had not known was in the book. Since it is too small to be picked out on screen, the image was left in place for the episode. Other books found on Picard's shelves include more Shakespeare, a mystery novel, and (rather surprisingly) two volumes of Nietzsche in German.

When asked if Picard has a tragic flaw he responds that he would have been more inclined to say yes a few years ago. There is a clear sense that in the beginning he felt that perhaps Picard could be seen as too rigid or inflexible in his approach to duty. That seems less true now as Stewart has worked on the character. He admits that sometimes he no longer knows where one starts and the other leaves off. "We are now inseparable and that makes me a little uneasy." He is perhaps thinking of the future beyond The Next Generation. It has been reported in the press that he was founding a Shakespearean theatre company in Los Angeles, but he says that that is a bit premature. What he is doing is conducting a workshop exclusively on Shakespeare for actors that meet on the Paramount lot on Saturdays. Nineteen actors were selected to participate in the first one for twelve weeks, to be followed by two other such groups for the same periods of time later in the year. After these are concluded he will take stock and decide if there is the nucleus of a company to be found here. He is quite certain that he wants to direct Shakespeare and has always wanted to have a company. He was not terribly impressed with the recent film version of Hamlet, save for Paul Schofield's performance as The Ghost. "I don't think I breathe when I watch Paul Schofield act." As for the rest, however engaging it may be in parts, "whatever it is, it ain't Shakespeare." His own choice for his favourite Shakespearean role might be Falstaff, which he says taught him more about acting than any other part he has done. He adds, with a laugh, that if he keeps losing weight on The Next Generation he might not be able to play it again. The most likely theatre work for him in the near future will be another slate of appearances in his own one-man version of A Christmas Carol next winter, with Paramount agreeing to grant him time from the series to direct eight stage performances in New York City.

What the future holds in store for Picard is less certain. A villain he would like to see return is Daimon Bok (the Ferengi in *The Battle*) but, he says, "nobody listens to me." He is not interested in becoming a Borg again — it's too uncomfortable having all those tubes and bits glued on — but "they are a great enemy and we must encounter them again." He also says that the relationship between Picard and Beverly Crusher is an area in the show that has been somewhat ignored and it is perhaps time to explore that a bit. When asked what has been the most emotionally challenging scene for him as an actor in the series, he notes that that could be taken in two ways. The most difficult scene to do as an actor was the mind-meld in *Sarek*, which required him to jump from one emotional outburst to another without the logical connection or progression of feelings between them. On the other hand, the most emotional moment for him personally came in Wil Wheaton's final episode. Working with Wil has been one of the most enjoyable aspects of doing the series for Stewart and he found himself quite overcome when the time came to say "I envy you Wesley Crusher, for you the adventure is just beginning!"



Stewart himself is looking forward to having a few weeks of uninterrupted reading during the break in filming between the end of the fourth series and the start of the next. He reports he is currently reading five books: Simon Schama's history of the French Revolution, *Citizens*; a Ruth Rendell mystery; a volume of poetry; *City of Nets*, a critically-praised account of Hollywood in the 1940s; and a book about the differences between the English and Americans given to him by The Stargazers. Reading and counting on getting "one really good laugh a day" from his co-workers gets him through the grind of the average 12-hour day on the set. He is proud that they have a reputation in Hollywood as being the nicest show to work on, but also the most undisciplined. Everyone contributes their bit of madness to keeping the tone light but Stewart and Michael Dorn take a particular delight in tormenting one another. Dorn tells convention audiences that Stewart started out very professional and is now a wild man; Stewart says that there is no reason why Michael cannot be the next Trevor Howard if he can teach him to speak properly. There have been frightening moments too, such as recently when Jonathan Frakes was injured when struck by a sword during filming of a fight scene for an episode with Robin Hood motif (*Q-pid*), but "a lot of times it is like being at a dinner party with your very best friends." And there is also the achievement of having emerged from the shadow of the original series. "We are creating our own history now, and that is very satisfying."

KATHLEEN TOTH continues her look at the fourth season of The Next Generation

17) NIGHT TERRORS

23RD MARCH 1991

TELEPLAY BY PAMELA DOUGLAS AND JERI TAYLOR; STORY BY SHARI GOODHARTZ; DIRECTED BY LES LANDAU; MUSIC BY RON JONES; VISUAL EFFECTS SUPERVISOR ROBERT LEGATO

An opportunity to observe the crew under unusual stress never quite lives up to its potential as the focus unaccountably drifts to minor characters when the crisis deepens.

The Enterprise is on the rim of an uncharted binary star system in search of the USS Brittain, a science ship unheard from since issuing a distress call 29 days ago. The Brittain is located — adrift and silent. Troi is deeply disturbed but only says that she senses "something". She accompanies the away team to the stricken vessel. Data can find no malfunction in the main systems. Nor can Dr Crusher provide an immediate explanation for the condition of the crew. Bodies are found everywhere, dead from a variety of causes including knife and phaser wounds. Troi leads them to the lone survivor, a betazoid who sits crouched in a corner, unable to speak or respond to her reassuring telepathic messages.

Answers remain elusive after the bodies are transferred to the Enterprise. The autopsies are complicated and the surviving crew member — whom Troi says did not kill the others — is in a profound catatonic state and unable to give them any information. Troi spends hours sitting with him but reports that she can only feel his terror. She is unable to get through to him although she has enough telepathic contact to pick up a warning about "voices out there".

Geordi also has problems. He says that the Brittain's engines are in perfect condition, yet he cannot get them to start. While he searches for an explanation to that part of the mystery, Dr Crusher makes a disturbing report to the Captain. She has found no evidence of any outside agent or source for what happened on the Brittain. All 34 crew members appeared to have killed each other, yet there were no unusual substances in their systems, no signs of alien organisms. She asks Picard to look at Captain Zaheva's last log entry. The Brittain's captain appears haggard and disorientated, compulsively tugging at her hair as she describes how she had to eliminate the first officer and others who had sabotaged the engines. Dr Crusher explains that mental deterioration seemed to have affected all the crew and this log entry was made after they had been adrift for over three weeks.

Troi has a most disturbing dream in which she seems to be flying through space towards a light. She hears voices that seem to say "eyes in the dark" and "one moon circles", yet she cannot get the voices to respond to her questions or reveal their location.

After four days of little progress, Captain Picard decides that it is time to prepare to tow the Brittain to Starbase 220 and let Starfleet take over the investigation. While these plans are made, strange things seem to be going on all over the Enterprise. O'Brien quarrels with Keiko over a sudden burst of jealousy. When he sulks off to Ten Forward another crewman insists that people are seeing ghosts in some of the corridors. Picard is working on his reports in his ready room when he is disturbed by the door chime. It keeps ringing, yet no one is there. When he ignores it he hears a knocking noise. Troi and Dr Crusher arrive to tell him what he must already suspect — that whatever happened on the Brittain is starting to happen to the Enterprise and they must get away from here at once. That is exactly what he intended to do, but the engines lose power and Geordi cannot get them restarted. They re now adrift, just like the Brittain.

After ten days they are still motionless and cannot expect outside help for weeks in response to their distress calls. Data has at least come up with a theory to explain the mysterious loss of power. They are trapped in a rare anomaly, a massive rupture in space into which energy is drained. Picard realises that Data is describing a Tychon's Rift, so named after the only captain known to have become trapped in one and escaped. Tychon managed that feat by igniting his highly explosive cargo and succeeding in getting his ship blown clear of the rift in the violent energy release. They have no comparable materials so they must seek some other way to generate sufficient energy to escape the rift.

Picard has to also be concerned about the mental condition of his crew. Only Data seems unaffected. The Captain questions Riker about any hallucinations he may be having. The first officer admits that he is not himself and has had the feeling that something was waiting for him in his quarters. Picard admits to similar thoughts and worries that one of them must attempt to keep control of their faculties at all times. He sends Riker to get some rest and heads for the bridge in the turbolift. The Captain suddenly becomes convinced that the ceiling of the lift is descending to crush him and arrives screaming as the doors open onto the bridge. Riker tries to sleep but suddenly finds his bed full of hideous snakes — which disappear when he leaps up.

Data reports that he and Geordi have come to the conclusion that their best hope of generating sufficient power is to duplicate the energy beam they had designed to use against the Borg with the main deflector dish. It will take them six hours to make the necessary modifications. Picard approves the attempt but also tells Data that, faced with the terrifying prospect of losing control over one's mind, he will need to rely upon him from now on.

Dr Crusher decides that she needs to make further tests on the remains of the Brittain's crew and goes to the makeshift morgue. Surrounded by tables of shroud-covered bodies, she begins to hear the sounds of movement and looks up to find all the corpses sitting at attention. The shaking doctor closes her eyes and demands that they go away.

Picard and the others are showing signs of extreme fatigue and irritability when his equally exhausted Chief Medical Officer finally comes to him with an explanation of their disorientation. Not only are they having trouble sleeping, no one has even had a dream since they located the Brittain — no one except Troi, that is. Brain tissue scans of the Brittain's crew and of the Enterprise crew show a unique chemical imbalance caused by dream deprivation. They are failing to achieve REM sleep, the level at which dreaming occurs, and "we have to dream in order to survive". Without dreaming they begin to loose cognitive ability, find it hard to concentrate, become irritable, forget how to do the most ordinary tasks — in short, all the things happening around them. The Doctor realises that there is more involved here than just Tychon's Rift and if she cannot find a way to restore the capacity to dream they will go insane.

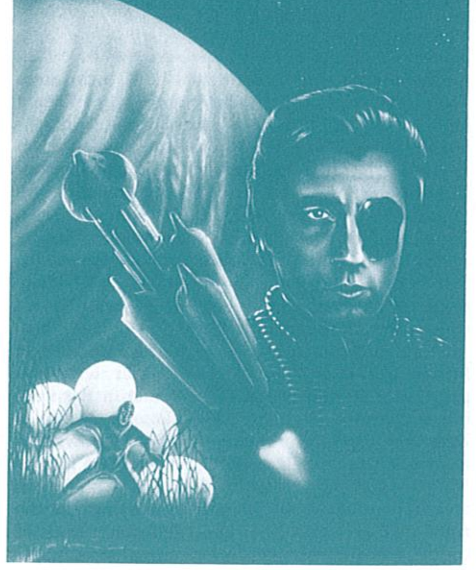
Troi has been dreaming, but only of the recurrent nightmare in which she hears voices repeating the same inscrutable words. She finds the nightmares so disturbing that she hardly sleeps at all any more and sees that in the end she will become just like the betazoid patient. Guinan finds that a riot is brewing in Ten Forward, where one crew member is persuading the others that this is all an experiment that Picard is running to see how long they can take this. In engineering, Geordi's concentration falters and Data must take the final steps to initiate the deflector shield sequence, but the beam is absorbed into the rift with no change in their condition. This failure sends Worf hurrying from the bridge and prepares a ceremonial dagger to take his own life. Troi follows him and pleads with him to stop. She demands to know why he is doing this and Word says it is because he is no longer a warrior : "I feel fear." Troi tells him it is just an illusion and asks him to let her take him to sickbay. He finally relents and allows her to take his hand.

Data takes command at the request of Captain Picard as many of the crew are no longer able to function normally. Troi continues to try to establish some kind of link with the catatonic betazoid and finds the same messages repeating in his mind that she has experienced in her dreams. She suddenly realises that her nightmare is actually a telepathic message being broadcast by some unknown crew trapped further into the rift. She and Dr Crusher theorise that the powerful telepathic transmission is creating the interruption of normal sleep in non-betazoids, but there is no way to block such signals. The only hope for both crews would be to get them to stop their telepathic emissions and perhaps coordinate their efforts to escape the rift. Troi hopes to be able to communicate with the aliens by controlling her dreaming long enough to direct a simple message back to them.

Data reviews all the compounds available to them in hope of finding something that might be used to create an intense explosion in conjunction with the other ship. Troi stops him when the image of the hydrogen atom flashes on his screen. She reminds him of the repeated message "one moon circles". Could they be asking for hydrogen? Data says that hydrogen could be used with another compound to produce sufficient force to free them from the rift — if the other ship has that compound. They have no options left. Data will direct a steam of all available hydrogen from the Enterprise towards the rift while Troi tries to communicate the simple message "Now!" in her dream. Data calculates that she must communicate within two minutes of entering REM sleep if the strategy is to succeed.

Power is reduced to life support systems in order to direct as much material as possible into the rift. This causes an outbreak of fighting in Ten Forward that Guinan quells with an unusual gun. Data sends a stream of hydrogen into the rift as Dr Crusher monitors Troi's entrance into dream sleep. At the last possible moment a huge explosion throws them from the rift, along with a ship of unfamiliar design that speeds away. Data sets course for Starbase 220 and, as his last act of command, orders Picard to bed and pleasant dreams.

DAVID MILLER looks at the two episodes on the 10th tape of Blake's 7 episodes to be released by BBC Video .



Trial

AT THE BEGINNING of *Trial* we find Blake teleporting himself down to a seemingly uninhabited planet for self-examination, since he is racked with guilt following the death of Gan. There is concern among the remaining Liberator crew. Has Blake deserted them forever? Unlikely, they reason — if Blake was going to do a runner, he'd find somewhere more hospitable to run. This planet is hardly paradise, there aren't even any people down there. Vila is, meantime, missing his soul-mate. "I wish Gan were here", he says. "Oh yes, of course," rejoins Avon, "He would be able to work out exactly what was going on."

After the leaden dialogue of Terry Nation's *Pressure Point*, Chris Boucher positively storms back with a superb script, full of cracking lines in an excellent plot. The visuals are marvellous too. However, just as we begin to wonder what has happened to the old Blakes 7 we know and love, Avon leaps a little too enthusiastically across the Liberator console, and very nearly double-takes as the plywood creaks ominously beneath him.

The crew find out what has happened to Blake by following Gan's simple line of reasoning. Blake has left them a video message. He needed time to think. "I almost killed you all ... I did kill Gan ... Where do we go from here?" He explains that he has a homing beacon that will activate in thirteen hours time. They will meet up then.

Down on the planet, which is blurred with heat-hazes and garishly lit with red filters, Blake is not exactly finding the peace he was expecting. Something is following him, pelting him with stones and spraying him with water. The "thing" steals Blake's communicator and homing beacon, and when he finally catches a glimpse of his tormentor, it is a tiny, elfin creature that darts into the undergrowth.

Meanwhile, at Space Headquarters, Travis is facing execution, on trial for the killing of 1417 citizens on the planet Zocaster. This is all a plot by Servalan to dispose of Travis before he can give evidence on her own inability to dispose of Blake. The sequences at Space Headquarters display some flawless continuity between this story and the first season's superb *Seek-Locate-Destroy*. The sets and models are carefully repeated, and the characters of Berkol and Rontane (as played by John Bryans and Peter Miles) are brought back as an almost comic double act.

In the ranks of the common soldiers, barely recognisable is Kevin Lloyd, now (in)famous as cuddly DC "Tosh" Lines in The Bill. Llyod adds to a pedigree cast, including Victoria Fairbrother as Travis's stiletto-heeled defence counsel. The only oddity is a Guard Commander who seems to think he's in The Army Game.

After some more chasing about on location, Blake finally gets to meet the goblin. He/she/it is called Zil, played by Claire Lewis like a Menoptera on speed who's been to the Play Away school of alien acting. (This is perhaps a little unfair, since it is virtually impossible to portray this sort of alien convincingly without looking silly!) To her great credit, Claire Lewis throws herself into the part heart and soul, and is perhaps ultimately let down by the costume, which resembles a head-to-toe prophylactic.

Back at Space HQ, the trial is getting underway, presided over by John Savident, with a head like a boiled egg and a deliciously prissy mien. "I will not have this tribunal reduced to the level of a common trooper's brawl" he booms, when things start getting out of hand. Savident is probably best remembered to Blake fans as the gross Egrorian in the Season D story Orbit.

Blake and the crew of the Liberator begin to make some uncomfortable discoveries about the planet. The oceans are composed of a substance like digestive fluids. The whole planet, it transpires, is one gigantic organism, and Zil and its like are merely parasites. The crew realise that they must get Blake back on board a.s.a.p.

Blake has been snapped out of his self-doubt by the philosophy of Zil, and immediately proposes a sortie on Space HQ, a lightning-strike to restore the crew's reputation for invincibility. They will use Avon's cloaking device. At the precise moment that Travis has been found guilty on all counts and is sentenced to death, Blake swoops in, guns blazing. The court is destroyed and Travis escapes by a whisker, to continue the hunt for Blake as a renegade from the Federation.

The whole episode is a tribute to the abilities of director Derek Martinus, (who directed *Evil of the Daleks* and *The Ice Warriors* among others for Doctor Who). He works wonders with limited space, and rightly concentrates on the characterisation. Of particular note in this story is the subtle change in Avon's character. Paul Darrow's early appearances grate like the pontifications of a know-it-all party bore. In this story he is suddenly charming, the character who will lead the series from Season C.

Killer

I WAS looking forward to *Killer*, the first episode to be written by Doctor Who writer/script editor Robert Holmes. It does not disappoint, but does show up some interesting differences in writing style. The characters suddenly spout 20th century words and phrases, Avon talks of sandwiches and Blake talks of pickle-barrels. Later in the story, when Blake relates the story of Lord Jeffrey Ashley and the Redskins, it is Holmes, not Blake, we hear.

The story, as with much of Holmes's work, relies on a familiarity with horror film clichés, in this case, "the corpse coming back to life" of the zombie and mummy classics. The plot is very simple, and another Holmes hallmark — the characterisation — is very strong. The story begins with Avon and Vila making a raid on the Federation base on the planet Fosforon. Here they meet Tynus, an old colleague of Avon's, who has possession of a crystal which Blake needs to decipher Federation codes. While the others are away, Blake intercepts a Wanderer class spaceship, which fills Cally with a premonition of some terrible evil. A 700 year-old corpse is retrieved from the Wanderer by the Fosforon personnel, and brings with it a virulent plague which contaminates the base.

The cast is very strong once again, with the excellent Paul Daneman as the words-weary Dr Bellfriar (what a wonderful name!) and Ronald Lacey as the traitorous Tynus. Watch out for a brief appearance by Morris Barry as the pathologist who dies at the hands of a 700 year-old corpse, proving that as well as being a distinguished director (*Tomb of the Cybermen* for Doctor Who) he has a commanding screen presence.

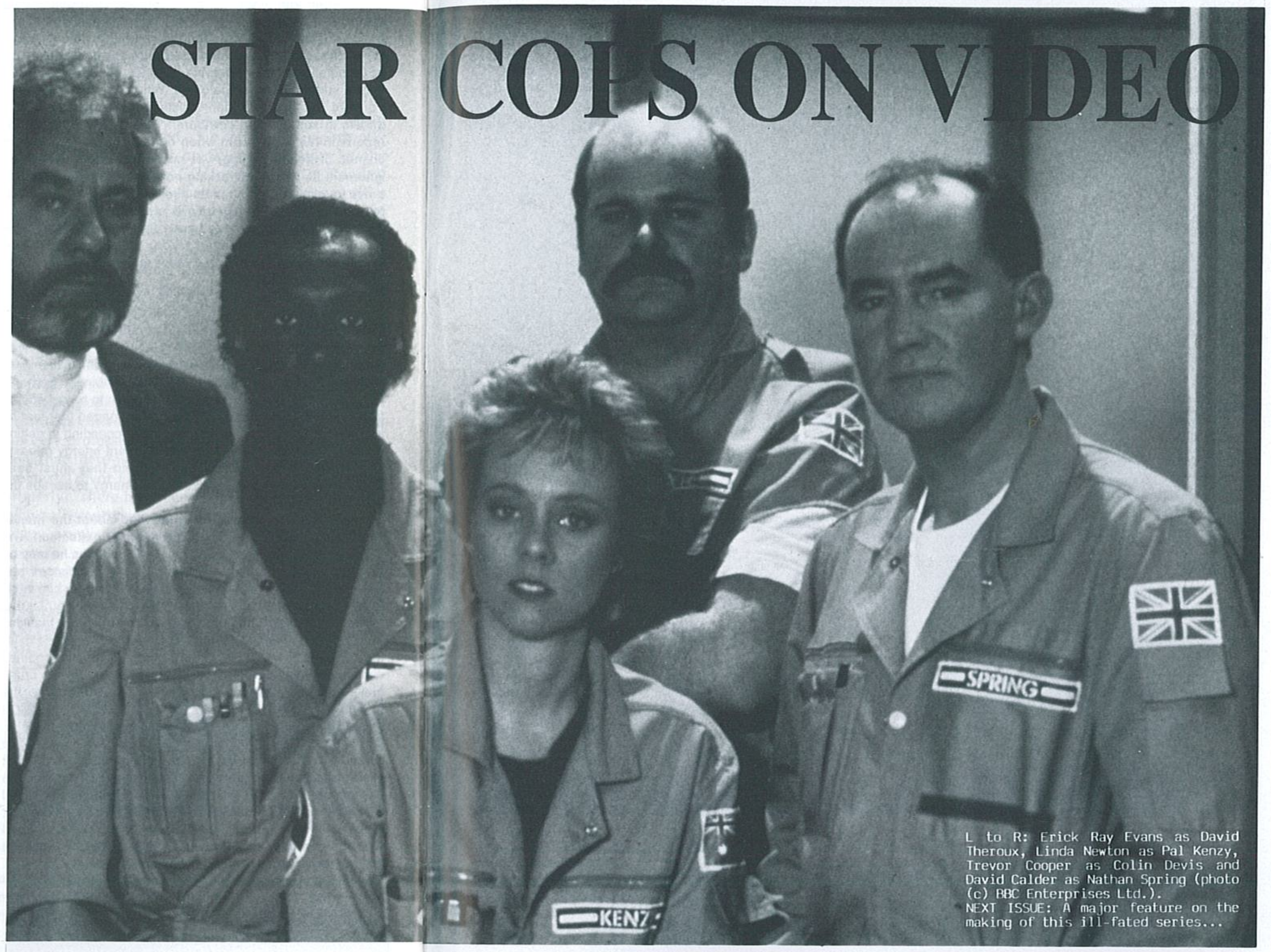
One of the most bizarre aspects of this episode is the costume design which manages to completely diffuse the tension of the plot with unintentional sniggers. Especially memorable, or totally ludicrous if you prefer, are the Michelin-Men creations worn by the Fosforon spacemen. Tynus and his men have a nice line in imitation-leather ponchos, and when fire breaks out later in the story it is tended by something that looks (I kid you not) like a man dressed as an albino tortoise. Whether these outfits have any bearing on reality, or are merely flights of fancy from the imagination of costume designer June Hudson, your guess is as good as mine.

The plague, the Killer of the title, has an unusual twist. The Wanderer ship drifted into the 61 Cygni sector of the galaxy, the "only region near Earth that hasn't been charted". There it was intercepted by aliens who altered the brain of one of the crewmembers, thus bringing the plague back to Earth. But the intention of the aliens was not to destroy completely the human race, merely to stop it trespassing on their space. The plague, Dr Bellfriar discovers, only affects those who travelled in space. At the end of the story, Servalan herself approaches the Fosforon base. Blake refuses to take the responsibility of allowing the plague off the planet, even if it means that Servalan will escape.

The implications of a superior — and hostile — alien intelligence in uncharted space serves as a neat precursor to the cataclysmic events which bring the second season of Blake's 7 to its conclusion.

STAR COPS ON VIDEO

This month saw the release of all nine episodes of Star Cops on BBC Video. RICHARD FITZGERALD examines the success and failures of this unusual science fiction series



L to R: Erick Ray Evans as David Theroux, Linda Newton as Pal Kenzy, Trevor Cooper as Colin Devis and David Calder as Nathan Spring (photo (c) BBC Enterprises Ltd.).
NEXT ISSUE: A major feature on the making of this ill-fated series...

WHERE DID it all go wrong? There were such high hopes for Star Cops when the BBC first announced plans for the series in 1986. After the Great Tripods Disaster and the enforced hiatus in production of Doctor Who, there hadn't been much for tv sf fans to cheer about until news emerged of a brand new space opera based around the activities of an interplanetary law enforcement agency. The prospects certainly appeared to be good. The show had been devised by ex-Blake's 7 script editor Chris Boucher and experienced talents like Phillip Martin and Graeme Harper had signed up to contribute to the writing and directing chores. On the visual effects side designer Mike Kelt expressed his enthusiasm for the series' potential when interviewed way back in DWB 36/37, talking of the innovatory 'motion control' techniques that would be used to film spaceflight sequences and the budget allocation that was far higher than anything Doctor Who had ever received.

It did look odd, at the time, that the BBC were prepared to make a major commitment of resources to a new project whilst simultaneously engaged in haggling over the future of its biggest worldwide money-spinner, and it looks even odder given the way that Star Cops was subsequently handled in the schedules; its one and only screening was positioned in an 8.30 slot on BBC 2 during the summer, the broadcasting equivalent of being shoved out the back door with a blanket over your head. Not surprisingly it failed to catch the public's imagination and plans for a second season disappeared into a black hole along with the money invested in stock shots that would never be needed again. Now five years later the BBC have decided to release the programme on video in a belated attempt to recover something from the project, although it's doubtful whether there will be much more of an impact this time around.

Each tape contains three 50-minute episodes which are rather optimistically described as being from "the explosive space series" — certainly the first episode, *An Instinct for Murder*, could better be called a damp squib, being as humdrum an introduction to a show as you could imagine. Things start to go wrong from the very first note of Justin Hayward's title song, a romantic ballad entitled 'Reach Across the Stars'. Quite why producer Evgeny Gridneff thought it appropriate that the music for a futuristic science fiction drama be handled by the former lead singer with the Moody Blues rather than, say, the slightly more experienced boys at the Radiophonic Workshop is something of a mystery. The result is especially jarring in the opening moments of the story proper as Hayward continues to croon the twee lyrics — "Reach across the stars, let them know you're with me", etc. — while we watch two men being murdered in rather brutal circumstances: one is held underwater by a couple of frogmen, the other suffocates when his backpack is tampered with during a space walk. The drowning investigation is led by Chief Superintendent Nathan Spring, a literally down-to-earth character with an ingrained mistrust of computers, something that results in a clash with his superior when he refuses to let the case drop despite a probability assessment that the death was accidental. Nathan, you see, prefers to follow his instincts than let his job be dominated by machines, which given the high-tech environment in which he'll soon find himself, is particularly ironic.

Despite the forty years in the future setting, the police are still overworked and under-resourced and Spring himself is a fairly typical example of the bloody-minded maverick tv detective forever at odds with his boss. What sets this series apart, of course, is that there can have been few bosses in the enviable position of Moray Watson's Commander who is able to genuinely send his troublesome detective into orbit by 'volunteering' him for the vacant post of head of the International Space Police Force (derogatorily known as 'Star Cops'). Spring has never been in space and wants the job like a hole in the head, but despite trying to blow his selection interview he finds himself on the final shortlist visiting the European space-station 'Charles De Gaulle' and in between fighting off bouts of nausea caused by the weightless conditions — a case of 'Retch Across the Stars'. He encounters resident Star Cop David Theroux who has his own problem, which to Nathan seems strangely familiar: A regular occurrence of death by spacesuit failure which the computer insists is accidental but which leaves Theroux convinced that there's more to it. When a high-ranking politician is the next to die, Spring is ordered to investigate and uncovers an ingenious scam to win the lucrative maintenance contract for spacesuits by artificially boosting the failure rate with random killings disguised as equipment malfunctions. Unfortunately, by cracking the case he has sealed his own fate and made his appointment to the Star Cops job inevitable. In the final scene Nathan visits his old boss and invites him to take a spacewalk with him sometime ...

Nathan Spring was played by the experienced British character actor David Calder who had previously starred as Greville Wynne in the true-life spy drama Wynne and Penkovsky and as a Detective Inspector in the crime series Widows (not to mention his role in a public information film as 'your local crime prevention officer'!). Calder was an excellent choice in the part, conveying just the right mix of world-weariness, self-doubt and, of course, a healthy scepticism for computerised policing while attempting to come to terms with his new environment. His character gave Star Cops a strong base on which to build, but it was an opportunity that would be largely wasted.

The special effects work is generally excellent with the opening shot of the space station being particularly impressive. However, the visual impact of this effect is immediately dissipated by some stiffly moving astronauts floating around courtesy of CSO. Much worse is the attempt to show the effects of weightlessness on the station which requires the actors to hang suspended from harnesses and flap their arms about while badly CSO'd clipboards, pens, food sachets, etc. float past them. In a couple of instances the film is actually slowed down to give an authentically languid appearance to the actors' movements, but these are blatantly easy to spot because lines of dialogue have been dubbed on to characters whose lips aren't moving!

This inconsistency would dog all the subsequent episodes to one degree or another, with the CSO work usually letting the side down. The second episode, *Conversations with the Dead*, highlights the budget constraints under which the series was working. Shots of the space freighter Dædalus travelling through the void are quite convincing, the motion control technique being a complete success. However, the crew of the ship are only heard as disembodied voices over a radio link, there obviously not being enough money to build the interior of the vessel. Meanwhile, in a parallel development, Nathan's girlfriend is murdered as part of a convoluted plot by British Intelligence and he confronts the killer late at night in a deserted park — which handily avoids the production team having to go to the trouble of creating a futuristic London setting. This episode also sees Nathan mercifully decide to move the Star Cop HQ to Moonbase and thus avoid any more of those slow motion harness sequence simulating zero-G.

The final episode of the first tape, *Intelligent Listening for Beginners*, shares most of the same faults as its predecessors as well as having a fairly obvious villain and is chiefly notable for the introduction of Linda Newton as the Australian Star Cop, Pal Kenzy, whom Nathan sacks on a corruption charge but who cheekily reinstates herself on national television after foiling a hijacking. The two-man moon buggies also make their debut here and are another example of Mike Kelt's excellent model work. The main letdowns are yet again the weightlessness scenes — this time on an Earth-Moon shuttle — and a particularly embarrassing example of the no-more-money syndrome. Nathan has to get out of an isolated research station in his moon buggy before the place blows sky high, but the doors of the parking bay are only half open and refuse to respond to further commands. Clearly he's going to get out and force them open manually, and we do see him leave the cockpit ... and a minute later he gets back in and hey presto the doors are open! To show him freeing the doors would have required CSO-ing him into the parking bay model or building a mock-up of the set and the budget couldn't be stretched to either.

The second tape kicks off with the best episode so far, *Trivial Games and Paranoid Pursuits*, in which the Star Cops investigate a disappearance on the US space station 'Ronald Reagan' and come up against an especially obnoxious redneck American in charge, while Moonbase gets a new Russian co-ordinator. Boucher's script cleverly plays on the mistrust between the various nationalities operating in space and the story clearly benefits from Graeme Harper's direction and some consistently good special effects.

Sadly the next episode, *This Case to be Opened in a Million Years*, is the very worst in the entire series with Phillip Martin a long way from his genre-busting days writing Gangsters as he spins a long-winded tale involving drug smuggling, nuclear waste and stereotypical Italians thrown in for good measure. One for the fast forward button, I think.

Thankfully the last episode on this tape, *In Warm Blood*, is a vast improvement and includes some literally blood-curdling scenes as the Star Cops rendezvous with a deep space probe whose five man crew have inexplicably died at exactly the same time. The mummified corpses of the crew members looked almost too realistic. The viewer soon realises that the deaths have some connection with medical experiments conducted by a Japanese pharmaceutical company whose corporate head is so stereotyped that you expect him to climb into a Zero any minute and bomb Pearl Harbour. However, by the end of the story the poor guy is reduced to a snivelling wreck when Nathan gives him a taste of his own medicine which just goes to prove what Corporal Jones always used to say : "They don't like it up 'em, Captain Mainwaring."

Tape three contains yet more stereotyping with vengeful Arabic princesses in *A Double Life* threatening to chop people's hands off and *Other People's Secrets* introducing us to a stern by-the-book German and (would you believe?) a gruff, bad-tempered Yorkshireman who dislikes women. Neither of these episodes is worth much comment apart from the one word warning *avoid*.

But the last story on the tape is the best of the lot. *Little Green Men and Other Martians* gives a hint of the programme's unrealised potential with, for once, a real mystery confronting the audience — has evidence of life really been found on Mars? And if true, why are so many people dying as a consequence? The resolution to this story clearly paved the way for the second season which was to have switched locations to the Red Planet as Nathan sought to extend the influence of the Star Cops. So, where *did* it all go wrong?

Well, Chris Boucher has only himself to blame for stringing out the introductions of his main characters over the first six episodes instead of all at once — I imagine he thought he could emulate Terry Nation's strategy on Blake's 7, but Nation had a full season of 13 episodes to play with, whereas Star Cops started with just ten (which soon became nine after a BBC strike). This lack of a stable line-up until the very last stories probably contributed to audience confusion and disinterest. In addition, only Spring and Kenzy build up a real rapport as the series progresses, all other relationships being characterised simply by a lot of shouting. Erick Ray Evans is adequate as the wise-cracking film buff David Theroux, but he lacks the necessary depth to bring off scenes such as the one in *This Case* ... in which he reveals his phobia about radiation poisoning. And his delivery of such (admittedly dreadful) lines as "Don't patronise me, you supercilious bastard" show him to be quite capable of achieving escape velocity without any artificial boosters. Trevor Cooper as Colin Devis makes a remarkable transformation from the hectoring bully in *Conversations with the Dead* to the jolly fatman persona of later episodes, presumably because some comic relief was desperately needed to lighten the show up a bit. The storylines themselves are a confused mixture, never quite sure if they're crime stories with a science-fiction element or vice versa, with only the *Little Green Men* episode striking exactly the right balance. In fact, if one looks at the range of topics covered — genetic engineering, computer viruses — the series seems to have most in common with Doomwatch (including a set of terrible video covers!).

In spite of all the criticism, I feel that a second season might have worked if just Spring and Kenzy had travelled to Mars and the action had concentrated on just those two, with the other Star Cops kept well out of sight. But we'll never know now. These nine episodes are all that the programme managed and if one had to cite a single reason why that is so then it has to be the same reason why working in the depths of space is so dangerous in the first place — no atmosphere.

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DOCTOR WHO

The first story from which you became a regular viewer:

....

List, in order of preference, your fifteen all-time favourite stories (since Doctor Who is such a long-running series we will be using a proportional scoring system which requires that you vote **only** from the first story of a Doctor of whom you have seen **all** stories of - i.e. if you can recall all stories as far back as The Sea Devils then only vote from the first story of Tom Baker's era, Robot, onwards):

1st ....

2nd ....

3rd ....

4th ....

5th ....

6th ....

7th ....

8th ....

9th ....

10th ....

11th ....

12th ....

13th ....

14th ....

15th ....

Using the above system, list your seven least favourite stories:

1st ....

2nd ....

3rd ....

4th ....

5th ....

6th ....

7th ....

List your favourite and least favourite choices under each of the following categories:

	Favourite	Least Favourite
Doctor	....	....
Companion	....	....
Enemy	....	....
Writer	....	....
Director	....	....
Producer	....	....
Season	....	....

BLAKE's 7

List, in order of preference, your ten all-time favourite stories:

1st ....

2nd ....

3rd ....

4th ....

5th ....

6th ....

7th ....

8th ....

9th ....

10th ....

List your five least favourite stories:

1st ....

2nd ....

3rd ....

4th ....

5th ....

List your favourite and least favourite choices under each of the following categories:

	Favourite	Least Favourite
Regular character 1st	....	....
2nd	....	....
3rd	....	....
Regular male actor	....	....
Regular female actor	....	....
Guest artist	....	....
Alien	....	....
Writer	....	....
Director	....	....
Season	....	....

The Original STAR TREK

List, in order of preference, your twelve all-time favourite stories:

1st ....

2nd ....

3rd ....

4th ....

5th ....

6th ....

7th ....

8th ....

9th ....

10th ....

11th ....

12th ....

List your six least favourite stories:

1st ....

2nd ....

3rd ....

4th ....

5th ....

6th ....

List your favourite and least favourite choices under each of the following categories:

	Favourite	Least Favourite
Regular character 1st	....	....
2nd	....	....
3rd	....	....
Regular actor	....	....
Guest artist (male)	....	....
Guest artist (female)	....	....
Culture	....	....
Monster/ villain	....	....
Episode title	....	....
Writer	....	....
Season	....	....